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The Works of

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

South Seas Edition

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5 Familiar Studies of Men and Books. Criticisms.
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Helen V. Fleck

THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

SOUTH SEAS EDITION

VOLUME XXX

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOLUME TWO

EDITED BY

SIR SIDNEY COLVIN

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1925

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VI

ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND SUMMERS

August, 1880—October, 1882

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VI

ALPINE WINTERS AND HIGHLAND SUMMERS

AFTER spending the months of June and July, 1880, in the rough Californian mountain quarters described in the *Silverado Squatters*, Stevenson took passage with his wife and young step-son from New York on the 7th of August, and arrived on the 17th at Liverpool, where his parents and I were waiting to meet him. Of her new family, the Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson brought thus strangely and from far into their midst made an immediate conquest. To her husband's especial happiness, there sprang up between her and his father the closest possible affection and confidence. Parents and friends—if it is permissible to one of the latter to say as much—rejoiced to recognize in Stevenson's wife a character as strong, interesting, and romantic almost as his own; an inseparable sharer of all his thoughts and staunch companion of all his adventures; the most open-hearted of friends to all who loved him; the most shrewd and stimulating critic of his work; and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and efficient of nurses.

From Liverpool the Stevenson party went on to make a stay in Scotland, first at Edinburgh, and afterwards for a few weeks at Strathpeffer, resting at Blair Athol on the way. It was now, in his thirtieth year, among the woods of Tummelside and under the shoulder of Ben Wyvis, that Stevenson acknowledged for the first time the full power and beauty of the Highland scenery,

which in youth, with his longings fixed ever upon the South, he had been accustomed to think too bleak and desolate. In the history of the country and its clans, on the other hand, and especially of their political and social transformation during the eighteenth century, he had been always keenly interested. In conversations with Principal Tulloch at Strathpeffer this interest was now revived, and he resolved to attempt a book on the subject, his father undertaking to keep him supplied with books and authorities; for it had quickly become apparent that he could not winter in Scotland. The state of his health continued to be very threatening. He suffered from acute chronic catarrh, accompanied by disquieting lung symptoms and great weakness; and was told accordingly that he must go for the winter, and probably for several succeeding winters, to the mountain valley of Davos in Switzerland, which within the last few years had been coming into repute as a place of recovery, or at least of arrested mischief, for lung patients. Thither he and his wife and step-son travelled accordingly at the end of October. Nor must another member of the party be forgotten, a black thoroughbred Skye terrier, the gift of Sir Walter Simpson. This creature was named, after his giver, Walter —a name subsequently corrupted into Wattie, Woggie, Wogg, Woggin, Bogie, Bogue, and a number of other affectionate diminutives which will be found occurring often enough in the following pages. He was a remarkably pretty, engaging, excitable, ill-behaved little specimen of his race, the occasion of infinite anxiety and laughing care to his devoted master and mistress until his death six years later.

The Davos of 1880, approached by an eight-hours laborious drive up the valley of the Prättigau, was a very different place from the extended and embellished Davos of to-day, with its railway, its modern shops, its electric lighting, and its crowd of winter visitors bent on outdoor and indoor entertainment. The Stevensons' quarters for the first winter were at the Hotel Belve-

dere, then a mere nucleus of the huge establishment it has since become. Besides the usual society of an invalid hotel, with its mingled tragedies and comedies, they had there the great advantage of the presence, in a neighbouring house, of an accomplished man of letters and one of the most charming of companions, John Addington Symonds, with his family. Mr. Symonds, whose health had been desperate before he tried the place, was a living testimony to its virtues, and was at this time engaged in building the chalet which became his home until he died fourteen years later. During Stevenson's first season at Davos, though his mind was full of literary enterprises, he was too ill to do much actual work. For the Highland history he read much, but composed little or nothing, and eventually this history went to swell the long list of his unwritten books. He saw through the press his first volume of collected essays, *Virginibus Puerisque*, which came out early in 1881; wrote the essays *Samuel Pepys* and *The Morality of the Profession of Letters*, for the *Cornhill* and the *Fortnightly Review* respectively, and sent to the *Pall Mall Gazette* the papers on the life and climate of Davos, posthumously reprinted in *Essays of Travel*. Beyond this, he only amused himself with verses, some of them afterwards published in *Underwoods*. Leaving the Alps at the end of April, 1881, he returned, after a short stay in France (at Fontainebleau, Paris, and St. Germain), to his family in Edinburgh. Thence the whole party again went to the Highlands, this time to Pitlochry and Braemar.

During the summer Stevenson heard of the intended retirement of Professor Æneas Mackay from the chair of History and Constitutional Law at Edinburgh University. He determined, with the encouragement of the outgoing professor and of several of his literary friends, to become a candidate for the post, which had to be filled by the Faculty of Advocates from among their own number. The duties were limited to the delivery of a short course of lectures in the summer term, and

Stevenson thought that he might be equal to them, and might prove, though certainly a new, yet perhaps a stimulating, type of professor. But knowing the nature of his public reputation, especially in Edinburgh, where the recollection of his daft student days was as yet stronger than the impression made by his recent performances in literature, he was well aware that his candidature must seem paradoxical, and stood little chance of success. The election took place in the late autumn of the same year, and he was defeated, receiving only three votes.

At Pitlochry Stevenson was for a while able to enjoy his life and to work well, writing two of the strongest of his short stories of Scottish life and superstition, *Thrawn Janet* and *The Merry Men*, originally designed to form part of a volume to be written by himself and his wife in collaboration. At Braemar he made a beginning of the nursery verses which afterwards grew into the volume called *The Child's Garden*, and conceived and half executed the fortunate project of *Treasure Island*, the book which was destined first to make him famous. But one of the most inclement of Scottish summers had before long undone all the good gained in the previous winter at Davos, and in the autumn of the year 1881 he repaired thither again.

This time his quarters were in a small chalet belonging to the proprietors of the Buol Hotel, the Chalet am Stein, or Chalet Buol, in the near neighbourhood of the Symonds's house. The beginning of his second stay was darkened by the serious illness of his wife; nevertheless the winter was one of much greater literary activity than the last. A Life of Hazlitt was projected, and studies were made for it, but for various reasons the project was never carried out. *Treasure Island* was finished; the greater part of the *Silverado Squatters* written; so were the essays *Talk and Talkers*, *A Gossip on Romance*, and several other of his best papers for magazines. By way of whim and pastime he occupied himself, to his own and his step-son's delight, with a

little set of woodcuts and verses printed by the latter at his toy press—"The Davos Press," as they called it—as well as with mimic campaigns carried on between the man and boy with armies of lead soldiers in the spacious loft which filled the upper floor of the chalet. For the first and almost the only time in his life there awoke in him during these winters in Davos the spirit of lampoon; and he poured forth sets of verses, not without touches of a Swiftean fire, against commercial frauds in general, and those of certain local tradesmen in particular, as well as others in memory of a defunct publican of Edinburgh who had been one of his butts in youth (*Casparidea and Brashiana*, both unpublished). Finally, much revived in health by the beneficent air of the Alpine valley, he left it again in midspring of 1882, to return once more to Scotland, and to be once more thrown back to, or below, the point whence he had started. After a short excursion from Edinburgh into the Appin country, where he made inquiries on the spot into the traditions concerning the murder of Campbell of Glenure, his three resting-places in Scotland during this summer were Stobo Manse near Peebles, Lochearnhead, the Kingussie. At Stobo the dampness of the season and the place quickly threw him again into a very low state of health, from which three subsequent weeks of brilliant sunshine in Speyside did but little to restore him. In spite of this renewed breakdown, when autumn came he would not face the idea of returning for a third season to Davos. He had himself felt deeply the austerity and monotony of the white Alpine world in winter; and though he had unquestionably gained in health there, his wife on her part had suffered much. So he made up his mind once again to try the Mediterranean coast of France, and Davos knew him no more.

To Sidney Colvin

I forget what were the two sets of verses (apparently satirical) here mentioned. The volume of essays must be *Virginibus Puerisque,* published the following spring; but it is dedicated in prose to W. E. Henley.

Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer [*July,* 1880]

My dear Colvin,—One or two words. We are here: all goes exceeding well with the wife and with the parents. Near here is a valley; birch woods, heather, and a stream; I have lain down and died; no country, no place, was ever for a moment so delightful to my soul. And I have been a Scotchman all my life, and denied my native land! Away with your gardens of roses, indeed! Give me the cool breath of Rogie waterfall, henceforth and for ever, world without end.

I enclose two poems of, I think, a high order. One is my dedication for my essays; it was occasioned by that delicious article in the *Spectator.* The other requires no explanation; c'est tout bonnement un petit chef d'œuvre de grâce, de délicatesse, et de bon sens humanitaire. Celui qui ne s'en sent pas touché jusqu' aux larmes—celui-là n'a pas vécu. I wish both poems back, as I am copyless: but they might return *via* Henley.

My father desires me still to withdraw the *Emigrant.* Whatever may be the pecuniary loss, he is willing to bear it; and the gain to my reputation will be considerable.

I am writing against time and the post runner. But you know what kind messages we both send to you. May you have as good a time as possible so far from Rogie! R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

A further stay at Strathpeffer led to disenchantment, not with outdoor nature, but with human nature as there represented, and he relieves his feelings as follows:

Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer, July, 1880

MY DEAR CHERLS,—I am well but have a little overtired myself which is disgusting. This is a heathenish place near delightful places, but inhabited, alas! by a wholly bestial crowd.

ON SOME GHOSTLY COMPANIONS AT A SPA

I had an evil day when I
To Strathpeffer drew anigh,
For there I found no human soul,
But Ogres occupied the whole.
They had at first a human air
In coats and flannel underwear.
They rose and walked upon their feet
And filled their bellies full of meat,
They wiped their lips when they had done—
But they were ogres every one.
Each issuing from his secret bower
I marked them in the morning hour.
By limp and totter, list and droop
I singled each one from the group.
Detected ogres, from my sight
Depart to your congenial night
From these fair vales: from this fair day
Fleet, spectres, on your downward way,
Like changing figures in a dream
To Muttonhole and Pittenweem!
Or, as by harmony divine
The devils quartered in the swine,
If any baser place exist
In God's great registration list—
Some den with wallow and a trough—
Find it, ye ogres, and be off!

Yours, R. L. S.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

I do not know what was the "tragi-comedy" here mentioned; nor have I any recollection of the second dog, "Chuchullin."

The Grosvenor Hotel, Victoria Station, Belgravia, London, S.W., late October 1880

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—My heart was ashamed at your letter; but a long rigmarole had just gone off from

Fanny, so I delayed still. You cannot conceive what annoyances I have had, most having cleared away. We had hoped for sure to be out of this yesterday, but it was impossible. I hope to-morrow we shall get away. I cannot tell you the sort of tragi-comedy I have been marching about in, but Paul has behaved so well that I am his bond-slave for life. He may now fleece me till all is blue; we dine there to-night. Manxy is entrusted to Katharine; Chuchullin is a most delightful dog. Gen. Robertson called and presented me with Hamley's *Operations of War*, in which I am now drowned a thousand fathom deep. And O! that I had been a soldier! is still my cry. I am terrified at this hotel; but I hope to-morrow we get to Paris, Poste Restante, where I know how to live cheap and well. I decided on Coester, as the other house might not have been ready for any time. Jenkin has been of very good counsel in this and my tragi-comedy. Please do not ask me about this just now; Jenk will tell you the outline, and I have not yet learned to speak of it with fortitude. I bear the fogs wonderfully; but O I long to be out of this den. David Park came to see us, which was very kind.

[*Postscript by Mrs. R. L. S.*] Don't be frightened at Louis' tragic manner of speaking; we had thought the affair much worse than it is and it has turned out comparatively nothing.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Landquart, Nov.* 5, 1880]

My dear Folk,—The Alps are all there: they beat everything to smash. This place and a great part of the way up yesterday was NO End. I am writing this as we wait the coach to take us to Davos, where we get for supper, and all our troubles of one kind at least, I hope at an end. Once we are settled I hereby promise, out of a troubled conscience, that you shall receive not

less than three letters a week. It has snowed last night on both sides of the valley, and the stone hills are whiter, and white lower down, than when we went to bed. It is cold, too; but to-day the sun shines and a cold, moaning wind that blew last evening, has moaned itself away and left the air still. We are taking charge of some extraordinary people, up to Davos; they are a couple, and make three such wandering, dumb sheep, whom we have comforted on that journey.

afft. son,
R. L. S.

To Isobel Strong

Written in answer to an enquiry from his step-daughter at San Francisco, on the second day after his arrival at Davos.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, November, 1880

No my che-ild—not Kamschatka this trip, only the top of the Alps, or thereby; up in a little valley in a wilderness of snowy mountains; the Rhine not far from us, quite a little highland river; eternal snow-peaks on every hand. Yes; just this once I should like to go to the Vienna gardens * with the family and hear Tweedle-dee drink something and see Germans—though God knows we have seen Germans enough this while back. Naturally some in the Customs House on the Alsatian frontier, who would have made one die from laughing in a theatre, and provoked a smile from us even in that dismal juncture. To see them, big blond, sham-Englishmen but with an unqualifiable air of not quite fighting the sham through, diving into old women's bags and going into paroxysms of arithmetic in white chalk, three or four of them (in full uniform) in full cry upon a single sum, with their brows bent and a kind of arithmetical agony upon their mugs. Madam, the diversion of cock-fighting has been much commended, but it was not a circumstance to that Custom House. They only opened one of our things: a basket. But when they

* In San Francisco.

met from within the intelligent gaze of *Woggs*, they all lay down and died. Woggs is a fine dog. . . .

God bless you! May coins fall into your coffee and the finest wines and wittles lie smilingly about your path, with a kind of dissolving view of fine scenery by way of background; and may all speak well of you—and me too for that matter—and generally all things be ordered unto you totally regardless of expense and with a view to nothing in the world but enjoyment, edification, and a portly and honoured age.—Your dear papa, R. L. S.

To A. G. Dew-Smith

Written soon after his arrival at Davos, and addressed by way of thanks to a friend at Cambridge, the late Mr. A. G. Dew-Smith, who had sent him a present of a box of cigarettes. Mr. Dew-Smith, a man of fine artistic tastes and mechanical genius, with a silken, somewhat foreign urbanity of bearing, was the original, so far as concerns manner and way of speech, of Attwater in the *Ebb-Tide*.

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, November,* 1880]

Figure me to yourself, I pray—
A man of my peculiar cut—
Apart from dancing and deray,*
Into an Alpine valley shut;

Shut in a kind of damned Hotel,
Discountenanced by God and man;
The food?—Sir, you would do as well
To cram your belly full of bran.

The company? Alas, the day
That I should dwell with such a crew,
With devil anything to say,
Nor any one to say it to!

* "The whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be in Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons."—See *Wandering Willie's Tale* in *Redgauntlet*, borrowed perhaps from *Christ's Kirk of the Green*.

The place? Although they call it Platz,
I will be bold and state my view;
It's not a place at all—and that's
The bottom verity, my Dew.

There are, as I will not deny,
Innumerable inns; a road;
Several Alps indifferent high;
The snow's inviolable abode;

Eleven English parsons, all
Entirely inoffensive; four
True human beings—what I call
Human—the deuce a cipher more;

A climate of surprising worth;
Innumerable dogs that bark;
Some air, some weather, and some earth;
A native race—God save the mark!—

A race that works, yet cannot work,
Yodels, but cannot yodel right,
Such as, unhelp'd, with rusty dirk,
I vow that I could wholly smite.

A river * that from morn to night
Down all the valley plays the fool;
Not once she pauses in her flight,
Nor knows the comfort of a pool;

But still keeps up, by straight or bend,
The selfsame pace she hath begun—
Still hurry, hurry, to the end—
Good God, is that the way to run?

If I a river were, I hope
That I should better realise
The opportunities and scope
Of that romantic enterprise.

* The Davoser Landwasser.

I should not ape the merely strange,
But aim besides at the divine;
And continuity and change
I still should labour to combine.

Here should I gallop down the race,
Here charge the sterling * like a bull;
There, as a man might wipe his face,
Lie, pleased and panting, in a pool.

But what, my Dew, in idle mood,
What prate I, minding not my debt?
What do I talk of bad or good?
The best is still a cigarette.

Me whether evil fate assault,
Or smiling providences crown—
Whether on high the eternal vault
Be blue, or crash with thunder down—

I judge the best, whate'er befall,
Is still to sit on one's behind,
And, having duly moistened all,
Smoke with an unperturbèd mind.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, December,* 1880]

My dear Colvin,—I feel better, but variable. I see from the doctor's report that I have more actual disease than I supposed; but there seems little doubt of my recovery. I like the place and shall like it much better when you come at Christmas. That is written on my heart: S. C. comes at Christmas: so if you play me false, I shall have a lie upon my conscience. I like Symonds very well, though he is much, I think, of an invalid in mind and character. But his mind is interesting, with many beautiful corners, and his consump-

* In architecture, a series of piles to defend the pier of a bridge.

tive smile very winning to see. We have had some good talks; one went over Zola, Balzac, Flaubert, Whitman, Christ, Handel, Milton, Sir Thomas Browne; do you see the *liaison?*—in another, I, the Bohnist, the un-Grecian, was the means of his conversion in the matter of the Ajax. It is truly not for nothing that I have read my Buckley.*

To-day, the south wind blows; and I am seedy in consequence.

Later.—I want to know when you are coming, so as to get you a room. You will toboggan and skate your head off, and I will talk it off, and briefly if you don't come pretty soon, I will cut you off with a shilling.

It would be handsome of you to write. The doctor says I may be as well as ever; but in the meantime I go slow and am fit for little.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

The suggestions contained in the following two letters to Mr. Gosse refer to the collection of English Odes which that gentleman was then engaged in editing (Kegan Paul, 1881).

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*Dec.* 6, 1880]

My dear Weg,—I have many letters that I ought to write in preference to this; but a duty to letters and to you prevails over any private consideration. You are going to collect odes; I could not wish a better man to do so; but I tremble lest you should commit two sins of omission. You will not, I am sure, be so far left to yourself as to give us no more of Dryden than the hackneyed *St. Cecilia;* I know you will give us some others of those surprising masterpieces where there is more sustained eloquence and harmony of English numbers than in all that has been written since; there is a machine about a poetical young lady,† and another about

* The translator of *Sophocles* in Bohn's Classics.
† Anne Killigrew.

either Charles or James, I know not which; and they are both indescribably fine. (Is Marvell's Horatian Ode good enough? I half think so.) But my great point is a fear that you are one of those who are unjust to our old Tennyson's *Duke of Wellington*. I have just been talking it over with Symonds; and we agreed that whether for its metrical effects, for its brief, plain, stirring words of portraiture, as—he "that never lost an English gun," or—the soldier salute; or for the heroic apostrophe to Nelson; that ode has never been surpassed in any tongue or time. Grant me the Duke, O Weg! I suppose you must not put in yours about the warship; you will have to admit worse ones, however.—Ever yours, R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

R. L. S. here sketches for his father the plan of the work on Highland history which they had discussed together in the preceding summer, and which Principal Tulloch had urged him to attempt.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*December* 12, 1880]

My dear Father,—Here is the scheme as well as I can foresee. I begin the book immediately after the '15, as then began the attempt to suppress the Highlands.

I. Thirty Years' Interval

(1) Rob Roy.
(2) The Independent Companies: the Watches.
(3) Story of Lady Grange.
(4) The Military Roads, and Disarmament: Wade and
(5) Burt.

II. The Heroic Age

(1) Duncan Forbes of Culloden.
(2) Flora Macdonald.
(3) The Forfeited Estates; including Hereditary Jurisdictions; and the admirable conduct of the tenants.

III. Literature here Intervenes

(1) The Ossianic Controversy.
(2) Boswell and Johnson.
(3) Mrs. Grant of Laggan.

IV. Economy

(1) Highland Economics.
(2) The Reinstatement of the Proprietors.
(3) The Evictions.
(4) Emigration.
(5) Present State.

V. Religion

(1) The Catholics, Episcopals, and Kirk, and Soc. Prop. Christ. Knowledge.
(2) The Men.
(3) The Disruption.

All this, of course, will greatly change in form, scope, and order; this is just a bird's-eye glance. Thank you for *Burt*, which came, and for your Union notes. I have read one-half (about 900 pages) of Wodrow's *Correspondence*, with some improvement, but great fatigue. The doctor thinks well of my recovery, which puts me in good hope for the future. I should certainly be able to make a fine history of this.

My Essays are going through the press, and should be out in January or February.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

[*Hotel Belvedere*], *Davos, Dec.* 19, 1880

This letter is a report of a long sederunt, also stete-runt in small committee at Davos Platz, Dec. 15, 1880. Its results are unhesitatingly shot at your head.

My dear Weg,—We both insist on the *Duke of Wellington*. Really it cannot be left out. Symonds said you would cover yourself with shame, and I add, your

friends with confusion, if you leave it out. Really, you know it is the only thing you have, since Dryden, where that irregular odic, odal, odous (?) verse is used with mastery and sense. And it's one of our few English blood-boilers.

(2) Byron: if anything: *Prometheus.*

(3) Shelley (1) *The World's Great Age* from Hellas we are both dead on. After that you have, of course, *The West Wind* thing. But we think (1) would maybe be enough; no more than two anyway.

(4) Herrick. *Meddowes* and *Come, my Corinna.* After that *Mr. Wickes:* two anyway.

(5) Leave out stanza 3rd of Congreve's thing, like a dear; we can't stand the "sigh" nor the "peruke."

(6) Milton. *Time* and the *Solemn Music.* We both agree we would rather go without *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* than these; for the reason that these are not so well known to the brutish herd.

(7) Is the *Royal George* an ode, or only an elegy? It's so good.

(8) We leave Campbell to you.

(9) If you take anything from Clough, but we don't either of us fancy you will, let it be *Come back.*

(10) Quite right about Dryden. I had a hankering after *Threnodia Augustalis;* but I find it long and with very prosaic holes: though, O! what fine stuff between whiles.

(11) Right with Collins.

(12) Right about Pope's Ode. But what can you give? *The Dying Christian?* or one of his inimitable courtesies? These last are fairly odes, by the Horatian model, just as my dear *Meddowes* is an ode in the name and for the sake of Bandusia.

(13) Whatever you do, you'll give us the *Greek Vase.*

(14) Do you like Jonson's "loathèd stage"? Verses 2, 3, and 4 are so bad, also the last line. But there is a fine movement and feeling in the rest.

We will have the *Duke of Wellington* by God. Pro Symonds and Stevenson. R. L. S.

To Charles Warren Stoddard

The prospect here alluded to of a cheap edition of the little travel-books did not get for the time being realised. The volume of essays in the printer's hands was *Virginibus Puerisque*. I do not know what were the pages in broad Scotch copied by way of enclosure.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*December*, 1880]

Dear Charles Warren Stoddard,—Many thanks to you for the letter and the photograph. Will you think it mean if I ask you to wait till there appears a promised cheap edition? Possibly the canny Scot does feel pleasure in the superior cheapness; but the true reason is this, that I think to put a few words, by way of notes, to each book in its new form, because that will be the Standard Edition, without which no g.'s l.* will be complete. The edition, briefly, *sine qua non*. Before that, I shall hope to send you my essays, which are in the printer's hands. I look to get yours soon. I am sorry to hear that the Custom House has proved fallible, like all other human houses and customs. Life consists of that sort of business, and I fear that there is a class of man, of which you offer no inapt type, doomed to a kind of mild, general disappointment through life. I do not believe that a man is the more unhappy for that. Disappointment, except with one's self, is not a very capital affair; and the sham beatitude, "Blessed is he that expecteth little," one of the truest, and in a sense, the most Christlike things in literature.

Alongside of you, I have been all my days a red cannon ball of dissipated effort; here I am by the heels in this Alpine valley, with just so much of a prospect of future restoration as shall make my present caged estate easily tolerable to me—shall or should, I would not swear to the word before the trial's done. I miss all my objects in the meantime; and, thank God, I have enough of my old, and maybe somewhat base phi-

* Gentleman's library.

losophy, to keep me on a good understanding with myself and Providence.

The mere extent of a man's travels has in it something consolatory. That he should have left friends and enemies in many different and distant quarters gives a sort of earthly dignity to his existence. And I think the better of myself for the belief that I have left some in California interested in me and my successes. Let me assure you, you who have made friends already among such various and distant races, that there is a certain phthisical Scot who will always be pleased to hear good news of you, and would be better pleased by nothing than to learn that you had thrown off your present incubus, largely consisting of letters I believe, and had sailed into some square work by way of change.

And by way of change in itself, let me copy on the other pages some broad Scotch I wrote for you when I was ill last spring in Oakland. It is no muckle worth: but ye should na look a gien horse in the moo'.—Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The verses, here mentioned, to Dr. John Brown (the admired author of *Rab and His Friends*) were meant as a reply to a letter of congratulation on the *Inland Voyage* received from him the year before. They are printed in *Underwoods*.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos, December 21, 1880

My dear People,—I do not understand these reproaches. The letters come between seven and nine in the evening; and every one about the books was answered that same night, and the answer left Davos by seven o'clock next morning. Perhaps the snow delayed them; if so, 'tis a good hint to you not to be too uneasy at apparent silences. There is no hurry about my father's notes; I shall not be writing anything till I get

home again, I believe. Only I want to be able to keep reading *ad hoc* all winter, as it seems about all I shall be fit for. About John Brown, I have been breaking my heart to finish a Scotch poem to him. Some of it is not really bad, but the rest will not come, and I mean to get it right before I do anything else.

The bazaar is over, £160 gained, and everybody's health lost: altogether, I never had a more uncomfortable time; apply to Fanny for further details of the discomfort.

We have our Wogg in somewhat better trim now, and vastly better spirits. The weather has been bad—for Davos, but indeed it is a wonderful climate. It never feels cold; yesterday, with a little, chill, small, northerly draught, for the first time, it was pinching. Usually, it may freeze, or snow, or do what it pleases, you feel it not, or hardly any.

Thanks for your notes; that fishery question will come in, as you notice, in the Highland Book, as well as under the Union; it is very important. I hear no word of Hugh Miller's *Evictions;* I count on that. What you say about the old and new Statistical is odd. It seems to me very much as if I were gingerly embarking on a *History of Modern Scotland.* Probably Tulloch will never carry it out. And, you see, once I have studied and written these two vols., *The Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* and *Scotland and the Union,* I shall have a good ground to go upon. The effect on my mind of what I have read has been to awaken a livelier sympathy for the Irish; although they never had the remarkable virtues, I fear they have suffered many of the injustices, of the Scottish Highlanders. Ruedi has seen me this morning; he says the disease is at a standstill, and I am to profit by it to take more exercise. Altogether, he seemed quite hopeful and pleased.—I am your ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*Christmas*, 1880]

My dear Colvin,—Thanks for yours; I waited, as I said I would. I now expect no answer from you, regarding you as a mere dumb cock-shy, or a target, at which we fire our arrows diligently all day long, with no anticipation it will bring them back to us. We are both sadly mortified you are not coming, but health comes first; alas, that man should be so crazy. What fun we could have, if we were all well, what work we could do, what a happy place we could make it for each other! If I were able to do what I want; but then I am not, and may leave that vein.

No. I do not think I shall require to know the Gaelic; few things are written in that language, or ever were; if you come to that, the number of those who could write, or even read it, through almost all my period, must, by all accounts, have been incredibly small. Of course, until the book is done, I must live as much as possible in the Highlands, and that suits my book as to health. It is a most interesting and sad story, and from the '45 it is all to be written for the first time. This, of course, will cause me a far greater difficulty about authorities; but I have already learned much, and where to look for more. One pleasant feature is the vast number of delightful writers I shall have to deal with: Burt, Johnson, Boswell, Mrs. Grant of Laggan, Scott. There will be interesting sections on the Ossianic controversy and the growth of the taste for Highland scenery. I have to touch upon Rob Roy, Flora Macdonald, the strange story of Lady Grange, the beautiful story of the tenants on the Forfeited Estates, and the odd, inhuman problem of the great evictions. The religious conditions are wild, unknown, very surprising. And three out of my five parts remain hitherto entirely unwritten. Smack!—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Davos, Dec. 26th, 1880

My dear Mother,—I was very tired yesterday and could not write; I tobogganed so furiously all morning; we had a delightful day, crowned by an incredible dinner—more courses than I have fingers on my hands. Your letter arrived duly at night, and I thank you for it as I should. You need not suppose I am at all insensible to my father's extraordinary kindness about this book; he is a brick; I vote for him freely. The assurance you speak of is what we all ought to have, and might have, and should not consent to live without. That people do not have it more than they do is, I believe, because parsons speak so much in long-drawn, theological similitudes, and won't say out what they mean about life, and man, and God, in fair and square human language. I wonder if you or my father ever thought of the obscurities that lie upon human duty from the negative form in which the ten commandments are stated; or of how Christ was so continually substituting affirmatives. "Thou shalt not" is but an example: "Thou shalt" is the law of God. It was this that seems meant in the phrase that "not one jot or tittle of the law should pass." But what led me to the remark is this: A kind of black angry look goes with that statement of the law in negatives. "To love one's neighbour as oneself" is certainly much harder, but states life so much more actively, gladly, and kindly, that you can begin to see some pleasure in it; and till you can see pleasure in these hard choices and bitter necessities, where is there any Good News to men? It is much more important to do right than not to do wrong; further, the one is possible, the other has always been and will ever be impossible; and the faithful *desire to do right* is accepted by God: that seems to me to be the gospel, and that was how Christ delivered us from the law. After people are told that surely they

might hear more encouraging sermons. To blow the trumpet for good would seem the parson's business; and since it is not in our own strength, but by faith and perseverance (no account made of slips) that we are to run the race, I do not see where they get the material for their gloomy discourses. Faith is, not to believe the Bible, but to believe in God; if you believe in God (or, for it's the same thing, have that assurance you speak about) where is there any more room for terror? There are only three possible attitudes: Optimism, which has gone to smash: Pessimism, which is on the rising hand and very popular among clergymen who seem to think they are Christians—Lily, I daresay, for instance; and this Faith, which is the gospel. Once you hold the last; it is your business (1) to find out what is right and (2) to try to do it; if you fail in the last, that is by commission, Christ tells you to hope; if you fail in the first, that is, by omission, his picture of the last day gives you but a black lookout. The whole necessary morality is kindness; and it should spring of itself, from the one fundamental doctrine, faith. If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness by you, you should be happy; and if happy surely you should be kind.

I beg your pardon for this long discourse; it is not all right, of course, but I am sure there is something in it. One thing I have not got clearly: that about the omission and the commission; but there is truth somewhere about it, and I have no time to try to clear it just now. Do you know, you have had about a *Cornhill* page of sermon? it is, however, true.

Lloyd heard with dismay Fanny was not going to give me a present; so F. and I had to go and buy things for ourselves and go through a representation of surprise when they were presented next morning. It gave us both quite a Santa Claus feeling on Xmas eve to see him so excited and hopeful; I enjoyed it hugely.

I believe I have only been twice away before on Xmas; once last year, over which I draw a veil; and

once in '65, I think, when I spent the day reading old magazines in a deserted Savile Club, and dined at night at Simpson's with a French novel; I had a heavy cold, I remember, and was not precisely merry. This time it was very different. I am glad it comforts you to know me to be with my wife. I cannot tell you what a change it is to me; may God bless her, and spare us long in love to each other. I send you both my most affectionate love, except what I keep for my wife, and remain

Your afft. son,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

I did go out to Davos after all in January, and found Stevenson apparently little improved in health, and depressed by a sad turn of destiny which had brought out his old friend and inspirer Mrs. Sitwell to the same place, at the same time, to watch beside the deathbed of her son—the youth commemorated in the verses headed *F. A. S., In Memoriam,* afterwards published in *Underwoods.* The following letter refers to a copy of Carlyle's *Reminiscences* which I had sent him some time after I came back to England.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*Spring,* 1881]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—My health is not just what it should be; I have lost weight, pulse, respiration, etc., and gained nothing in the way of my old bellows. But these last few days, with tonic, cod-liver oil, better wine (there is some better now), and perpetual beef-tea, I think I have progressed. To say truth, I have been here a little over long. I was reckoning up, and since I have known you, already quite a while, I have not, I believe, remained so long in any one place as here in Davos. That tells on my old gipsy nature; like a violin hung up, I begin to lose what music there was in me; and with the music, I do not know what besides, or do not know what to call it, but something radically part of life, a rhythm, perhaps, in one's old and so

brutally over-ridden nerves, or perhaps a kind of variety of blood that the heart has come to look for.

I purposely knocked myself off first. As to F. A. S., I believe I am no sound authority; I alternate between a stiff disregard and a kind of horror. In neither mood can a man judge at all. I know the thing to be terribly perilous, I fear it to be now altogether hopeless. Luck has failed; the weather has not been favourable; and in her true heart, the mother hopes no more. But—well, I feel a great deal, that I either cannot or will not say, as you well know. It has helped to make me more conscious of the wolverine on my own shoulders, and that also makes me a poor judge and poor adviser. Perhaps, if we were all marched out in a row, and a piece of platoon firing to the drums performed, it would be well for us; although, I suppose—and yet I wonder!—so ill for the poor mother and for the dear wife. But you can see this makes me morbid. *Sufficit; explicit.*

You are right about the Carlyle book; F. and I are in a world not ours; but pardon me, as far as sending on goes, we take another view: the first volume, *à la bonne heure!* but not—never—the second. Two hours of hysterics can be no good matter for a sick nurse, and the strange, hard, old being in so lamentable and yet human a desolation—crying out like a burnt child, and yet always wisely and beautifully—how can that end, as a piece of reading, even to the strong—but on the brink of the most cruel kind of weeping? I observe the old man's style is stronger on me than ever it was, and by rights, too, since I have just laid down his most attaching book. God rest the baith o' them! But even if they do not meet again, how we should all be strengthened to be kind, and not only in act, in speech also, that so much more important part. See what this apostle of silence most regrets, not speaking out his heart.

I was struck as you were by the admirable, sudden, clear sunshine upon Southey—even on his works. Symonds, to whom I repeated it, remarked at once, a man

who was thus respected by both Carlyle and Landor must have had more in him than we can trace. So I feel with true humility.

It was to save my brain that Symonds proposed reviewing. He and, it appears, Leslie Stephen fear a little some eclipse: I am not quite without sharing the fear. I know my own languor as no one else does; it is a dead down-draught, a heavy fardel. Yet if I could shake off the wolverine aforesaid, and his fangs are lighter, though perhaps I feel them more, I believe I could be myself again a while. I have not written any letter for a great time; none saying what I feel, since you were here, I fancy. Be duly obliged for it, and take my most earnest thanks not only for the books but for your letter.—Your affectionate,

R. L. S.

The effect of reading this on Fanny shows me I must tell you I am very happy, peaceful, and jolly, except for questions of work and the states of other people.

Woggin sends his love.

To Horatio F. Brown

A close intimate of J. A. Symonds, and frequent visitor at Davos, was Mr. Horatio F. Brown, author of *Life on the Lagoons*, etc. He took warmly, as did every one, to Stevenson. The following two notes are from a copy of Penn's *Fruits of Solitude*, printed at Philadelphia, which Stevenson sent him as a gift this winter after his return to Venice.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*February*, 1881]

My dear Brown,—Here it is, with the mark of a San Francisco *bouquiniste*. And if ever in all my "human conduct" I have done a better thing to any fellow-creature than handing on to you this sweet, dignified, and wholesome book, I know I shall hear of it on the last day. To write a book like this were impossible; at least one can hand it on—with a wrench—one to another. My wife cries out and my own heart misgives

me, but still here it is. I could scarcely better prove myself.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Horatio F. Brown

[*Hotel Belvedere, Davos, February,* 1881]

My dear Brown,—I hope, if you get thus far, you will know what an invaluable present I have made you. Even the copy was dear to me, printed in the colony that Penn established, and carried in my pocket all about the San Francisco streets, read in street cars and ferry-boats, when I was sick unto death, and found in all times and places a peaceful and sweet companion. But I hope, when you shall have reached this note, my gift will not have been in vain; for while just now we are so busy and intelligent, there is not the man living, no, nor recently dead, that could put, with so lovely a spirit, so much honest, kind wisdom into words.

R. L. S.

To Horatio F. Brown

The following experiment in English alcaics was suggested by conversations with Mr. Brown and J. A. Symonds on metrical forms, followed by the despatch of some translations from old Venetian boat-songs by the former after his return to Venice.

Hotel Belvedere, Davos [*April,* 1881]

My dear Brown,—Nine years I have conded them.

Brave lads in olden musical centuries
Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,
  Sat late by alehouse doors in April
  Chaunting in joy as the moon was rising:

Moon-seen and merry, under the trellises,
Flush-faced they played with old polysyllables;
  Spring scents inspired,* old wine diluted;
  Love and Apollo were there to chorus.

* *I.e.*, breathed in, inhaled; a rare but legitimate use of the word.

Now these, the songs, remain to eternity,
Those, only those, the bountiful choristers
Gone—those are gone, those unremembered
Sleep and are silent in earth for ever.

So man himself appears and evanishes,
So smiles and goes; as wanderers halting at
Some green-embowered house, play their music,
Play and are gone on the windy highway;

Yet dwells the strain enshrined in the memory
Long after they departed eternally,
Forth-faring tow'rd far mountain summits,
Cities of men on the sounding Ocean.

Youth sang the song in years immemorial;
Brave chanticleer, he sang and was beautiful;
Bird-haunted, green tree-tops in springtime
Heard and were pleased by the voice of singing;

Youth goes, and leaves behind him a prodigy—
Songs sent by thee afar from Venetian
Sea-grey lagunes, sea-paven highways,
Dear to me here in my Alpine exile.

Please, my dear Brown, forgive my horrid delay. Symonds overworked and knocked up. I off my sleep; my wife gone to Paris. Weather lovely.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Monte Generoso in May; here, I think, till the end of April; write again, to prove you are forgiving.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Monte Generoso was given up; and on the way home to Scotland Stevenson had stopped for a while at Fontainebleau, and then in Paris; whence, finding himself unpleasantly affected by the climate, he presently took refuge at St. Germain.

Hotel du Pavillon Henry IV.,
St. Germain-en-Laye, Sunday, May 1st, 1881

My dear People,—A week in Paris reduced me to the limpness and lack of appetite peculiar to a kid glove, and gave Fanny a jumping sore throat. It's my belief there is death in the kettle there; a pestilence or the like. We came out here, pitched on the *Star and Garter* (they call it Somebody's pavilion), found the place a bed of lilacs and nightingales (first time I ever heard one), and also of a bird called the *piasseur*, cheerfulest of sylvan creatures, an ideal comic opera in itself. "Come along, what fun, here's Pan in the next glade at picnic, and this-yer's Arcadia, and it's awful fun, and I've had a glass, I will not deny, but not to see it on me," that is his meaning as near as I can gather. Well, the place (forest of beeches all new-fledged, grass like velvet, fleets of hyacinth) pleased us and did us good. We tried all ways to find a cheaper place, but could find nothing safe; cold, damp, brick-floored rooms and sich; we could not leave Paris till your seven days' sight on draft expired; we dared not go back to be miasmatised in these homes of putridity, so here we are till Tuesday in the *Star and Garter.* My throat is quite cured, appetite and strength on the mend. Fanny seems also picking up.

If we are to come to Scotland, I *will* have fir-trees, and I want a burn, the firs for my physical, the water for my moral health.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

At Pitlochry, Stevenson was for some weeks in good health and working order. The inquiries about the later life of Jean Cavalier, the Protestant leader in the Cévennes, refer to a literary scheme, whether of romance or history I forget, which had been in his mind ever since the *Travels with a Donkey.*

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 6, 1881

My dear Weg,—Here I am in my native land, being gently blown and hailed upon, and sitting nearer and

nearer to the fire. A cottage near a moor is soon to receive our human forms; it is also near a burn to which Professor Blackie (no less!) has written some verses in his hot old age, and near a farm from whence we shall draw cream and fatness. Should I be moved to join Blackie, I shall go upon my knees and pray hard against temptation; although, since the new Version, I do not know the proper form of words. The swollen, childish, and pedantic vanity that moved the said revisers to put "bring" for "lead," is a sort of literary fault that calls for an eternal hell; it may be quite a small place, a star of the least magnitude, and shabbily furnished; there shall ——, ——, the revisers of the Bible and other absolutely loathsome literary lepers, dwell among broken pens, bad, *groundy* ink and ruled blotting-paper made in France—all eagerly burning to write, and all inflicted with incurable aphasia. I should not have thought upon that torture had I not suffered it in moderation myself, but it is too horrid even for a hell; let's let 'em off with an eternal toothache.

All this talk is partly to persuade you that I write to you out of good feeling only, which is not the case. I am a beggar: ask Dobson, Saintsbury, yourself, and any other of these cheeses who know something of the eighteenth century, what became of Jean Cavalier between his coming to England and his death in 1740. Is anything interesting known about him? Whom did he marry? The happy French, smilingly following one another in a long procession headed by the loud and empty Napoleon Peyrat, say, Olympe Dunoyer, Voltaire's old flame. Vacquerie even thinks that they were rivals, and is very French and very literary and very silly in his comments. Now I may almost say it consists with my knowledge that all this has not a shadow to rest upon. It is very odd and very annoying; I have splendid materials for Cavalier till he comes to my own country; and there, though he continues to advance in the service, he becomes entirely invisible to

me. Any information about him will be greatly welcome: I may mention that I know as much as I desire about the other prophets, Marion, Fage, Cavalier (de Sonne), my Cavalier's cousin, the unhappy Lions, and the idiotic Mr. Lacy; so if any erudite starts upon that track, you may choke him off. If you can find aught for me, or if you will but try, count on my undying gratitude. Lang's "Library" is very pleasant reading. My book *will* reach you soon, for I write about it to-day.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To PROFESSOR GEORGE SAINTSBURY

[? *Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June,* 1881]

MY DEAR SAINTSBURY,—Thanks for yours. Why did I call Lockhart a cad? That calls for an answer, and I give it. "Scorpion" literature seems at the best no very fit employment for a man of genius, which Lockhart was—and none at all for a gentleman. But if a man goes in for such a trade, he must be ready for the consequences; and I do not conceive a gentleman as a coward; the white feather is not his crest, it *almost* excludes—and I put the "almost" with reluctance. Well, now about the duel? Even Bel-Ami turned up on the *terrain.* But Lockhart? *Et responsum est ab omnibus. Non est inventus.* I have often wondered how Scott took that episode. I do not know how this view will strike you; but it seems to me the "good old honest" fashion of our fathers, though I own it does not agree with the New Morality. "Cad" may be perhaps an expression too vivacious and not well chosen; it is, at least upon my view, substantially just.

Now if you mean to comb my wig, comb it from the right parting—I know you will comb it well.

An infinitely small jest occurs to me in connection with the historic umbrella: and perhaps its infinite smallness attracts me. Would you mind handing it to Rudyard Kipling with the enclosed note? It seems to

me fitly to consecrate and commemorate this most absurd episode.

Yours very sincerely,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

(Enclosure)

This Umbrella
purchased in the year 1878 by
Robert Louis Stevenson
(and faithfully stabled for more than twenty years in the halls of George Saintsbury)
is now handed on at the suggestion of the first and by the loyal hands of the second
to
Rudyard Kipling.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

Work on a series of tales of terror, or, as he called them, "crawlers," planned in collaboration with his wife, soon superseded for the moment other literary interests in Stevenson's mind. *Thrawn Janet* and the *Body-Snatcher* were the only two of the set completed under their original titles: *The Wreck of the "Susanna"* contained, I think, the germs of *The Merry Men.*

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*June,* 1881]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—*The Black Man and Other Tales.*

The Black Man:
I. Thrawn Janet.
II. The Devil on Cramond Sands.
The Shadow on the Bed.
The Body-Snatchers.
The Case Bottle.
The King's Horn.
The Actor's Wife.
The Wreck of the *Susanna.*

This is the new work on which I am engaged with Fanny; they are all supernatural. *Thrawn Janet* is off to Stephen, but as it is all in Scotch he cannot take it, I know. It was *so good,* I could not help sending it. My

health improves. We have a lovely spot here: a little green glen with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow-white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs and pots; never was so sweet a little river. Behind, great purple moorlands reaching to Ben Vrackie. Hunger lives here, alone with larks and sheep. Sweet spot, sweet spot.

Write me a word about Bob's professoriate and Landor, and what you think of *The Black Man*. The tales are all ghastly. *Thrawn Janet* frightened me to death. There will maybe be another—*The Dead Man's Letter*. I believe I shall recover; and I am, in this blessed hope, yours exuberantly, R. L. S.

To Professor Æneas Mackay

This and the next four or five letters refer to the candidature of R. L. S. for the Edinburgh Chair.

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry,
Wednesday, June 21, 1881

My dear Mackay,—What is this I hear?—that you are retiring from your chair. It is not, I hope, from ill-health?

But if you are retiring, may I ask if you have promised your support to any successor? I have a great mind to try. The summer session would suit me; the chair would suit me—if only I would suit it; I certainly should work it hard: that I can promise. I only wish it were a few years from now, when I hope to have something more substantial to show for myself. Up to the present time, all that I have published, even bordering on history, has been in an occasional form, and I fear this is much against me.

Please let me hear a word in answer, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Professor Æneas Mackay

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*June*, 1881]

My dear Mackay,—Thank you very much for your kind letter, and still more for your good opinion. You are not the only one who has regretted my absence from your lectures; but you were to me, then, only a part of a mangle through which I was being slowly and unwillingly dragged—part of a course which I had not chosen—part, in a word, of an organised boredom.

I am glad to have your reasons for giving up the chair; they are partly pleasant, and partly honourable to you. And I think one may say that every man who publicly declines a plurality of offices, makes it perceptibly more difficult for the next man to accept them.

Every one tells me that I come too late upon the field, every one being pledged, which, seeing it is yet too early for any one to come upon the field, I must regard as a polite evasion. Yet all advise me to stand, as it might serve me against the next vacancy. So stand I shall, unless things are changed. As it is, with my health this summer class is a great attraction; it is perhaps the only hope I may have of a permanent income. I had supposed the needs of the chair might be met by choosing every year some period of history in which questions of Constitutional Law were involved; but this is to look too far forward.

I understand (1*st*) that no overt steps can be taken till your resignation is accepted; and (2*nd*) that in the meantime I may, without offence, mention my design to stand.

If I am mistaken about these, please correct me, as I do not wish to appear where I should not.

Again thanking you very heartily for your coals of fire I remain yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*June*, 1881]

My dear S. C.,—Great and glorious news. Your friend, the bold unfearing chap, Aims at a professorial cap, And now besieges, do and dare, The Edinburgh History chair. Three months in summer only it Will bind him to that windy bit; The other nine to range abroad, Untrammel'd in the eye of God. Mark in particular one thing: He means to work that cursèd thing, And to the golden youth explain Scotland and England, France and Spain.

In short, sir, I mean to try for this chair. I do believe I can make something out of it. It will be a pulpit in a sense; for I am nothing if not moral, as you know. My works are unfortunately so light and trifling they may interfere. But if you think, as I think, I am fit to fight it, send me the best kind of testimonial stating all you can in favour of me and, with your best art, turning the difficulty of my never having done anything in history, strictly speaking. Second, is there anybody else, think you, from whom I could wring one—I mean, you could wring one for me? Any party in London or Cambridge who thinks well enough of my little books to back me up with a few heartfelt words? Jenkin approves highly; but says, pile in *English* testimonials. Now I only know Stephen, Symonds, Lang, Gosse and you, and Meredith, to be sure. The chair is in the gift of the Faculty of Advocates, where I believe I am more wondered at than loved. I do not know the foundation; one or two hundred, I suppose. But it would be a good thing for me, out and out good. Help me to live, help me to *work*, for I am the better of pressure, and help me to say what I want about God, man and life.

R. L. S.

Heart-broken trying to write rightly to people.
History and Constitutional Law is the full style.

To Edmund Gosse

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 24, 1881

My dear Gosse,—I wonder if I misdirected my last to you. I begin to fear it. I hope, however, this will go right. I am in act to do a mad thing—to stand for the Edinburgh Chair of History; it is elected for by the advocates, *quorum pars;* I am told that I am too late this year; but advised on all hands to go on, as it is likely soon to be once more vacant; and I shall have done myself good for the next time. Now, if I got the thing (which I cannot, it appears), I believe, in spite of all my imperfections, I could be decently effectual. If you can think so also, do put it in a testimonial.

Heavens! *Je me sauve,* I have something else to say to you, but after that (which is not a joke) I shall keep it for another shoot.—Yours testimonially,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

I surely need not add, dear lad, that if you don't feel like it, you will only have to pacify me by a long letter on general subjects, when I shall hasten to respond in recompense for my assault upon the postal highway.

To Charles J. Guthrie

The next two letters are addressed to an old friend and fellow-member of the Speculative Society, who had passed Advocate six years before, on the same day as R. L. S. himself, and rose to be Lord Guthrie, a Senator of the Scottish Courts of Justice, and owned Swanston Cottage, sacred to the memory of R. L. S., for his summer home.

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, June 30, 1881

My dear Guthrie,—I propose to myself to stand for Mackay's chair. I can promise that I will not spare to work. If you can see your way to help me, I shall be glad; and you may at least not mind making my candidature known.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles J. Guthrie

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, July 2nd, 1881

My dear Guthrie,—Many thanks for your support, and many more for the kindness and thoughtfulness of your letter. I shall take your advice in both directions; presuming that by "electors" you mean the curators. I must see to this soon; and I feel it would also do no harm to look in at the P. H.* As soon then as I get through with a piece of work that both sits upon me like a stone and attracts me like a piece of travel, I shall come to town and go a-visiting. Testimonial-hunting is a queer form of sport—but has its pleasures.

If I got that chair, the Spec.† would have a warm defender near at hand! The sight of your fist made me Speculative on the past.—Yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*July,* 1881]

My dear Weg,—Many thanks for the testimonial; many thanks for your blind, wondering letter; many wishes, lastly, for your swift recovery. Insomnia is the opposite pole from my complaint; which brings with it a nervous lethargy, an unkind, unwholesome, and ungentle somnolence, fruitful in heavy heads and heavy eyes at morning. You cannot sleep; well, I can best explain my state thus: I cannot wake. Sleep, like the lees of a posset, lingers all day, lead-heavy, in my knees and ankles. Weight on the shoulders, torpor on the brain. And there is more than too much of that from an ungrateful hound who is now enjoying his first decently competent and peaceful weeks for close upon two years; happy in a big brown moor behind him, and an incomparable burn by his side; happy, above all, in

* Parliament House † Speculative Society.

some work—for at last I am at work with that appetite and confidence that alone makes work supportable.

I told you I had something else to say. I am very tedious—it is another request. In August and a good part of September we shall be in Braemar, in a house with some accommodation. Now Braemar is a place patronised by the royalty of the Sister Kingdoms—Victoria and the Cairngorms, sir, honouring that countryside by their conjunct presence. This seems to me the spot for A Bard. Now can you come to see us for a little while? I can promise you, you must like my father, because you are a human being; you ought to like Braemar, because of your avocation; and you ought to like me, because I like you; and again, you must like my wife, because she likes cats; and as for my mother—well, come and see, what do you think? that is best. Mrs. Gosse, my wife tells me, will have other fish to fry; and to be plain, I should not like to ask her till I had seen the house. But a lone man I know we shall be equal to. *Qu'en dis tu? Viens.*—Yours,

R. L. S.

To P. G. Hamerton

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*July*, 1881]

My dear Mr. Hammerton,—(There goes the second M.; it is a certainty.) Thank you for your prompt and kind answer, little as I deserved it, though I hope to show you I was less undeserving than I seemed. But just might I delete two words in your testimonial? The two words "and legal" were unfortunately winged by chance against my weakest spot, and would go far to damn me.

It was not my bliss that I was interested in when I was married; it was a sort of marriage *in extremis;* and if I am where I am, it is thanks to the care of that lady who married me when I was a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter for an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom.

I had a fair experience of that kind of illness when all the women (God bless them!) turn round upon the streets and look after you with a look that is only too kind not to be cruel. I have had nearly two years of more or less prostration. I have done no work whatever since the February before last until quite of late. To be precise, until the beginning of last month, exactly two essays. All last winter I was at Davos; and indeed I am home here just now against the doctor's orders, and must soon be back again to that unkindly haunt "upon the mountains visitant"—there goes no angel there but the angel of death.* The deaths of last winter are still sore spots to me. . . . So, you see, I am not very likely to go on a "wild expedition," cis-Stygian at least. The truth is, I am scarce justified in standing for the chair, though I hope you will not mention this; and yet my health is one of my reasons, for the class is in summer.

I hope this statement of my case will make my long neglect appear less unkind. It was certainly not because I ever forgot you, or your unwonted kindness; and it was not because I was in any sense rioting in pleasures.

I am glad to hear the catamaran is on her legs again; you have my warmest wishes for a good cruise down the Saône; and yet there comes some envy to that wish, for when shall I go cruising? Here a sheer hulk, alas! lies R. L. S. But I will continue to hope for a better time, canoes that will sail better to the wind, and a river grander than the Saône.

I heard, by the way, in a letter of counsel from a well-wisher, one reason of my town's absurdity about the chair of Art: † I fear it is characteristic of her manners. It was because you did not call upon the electors!

* "He knew the rocks where angels haunt,
Upon the mountains visitant."
—Wordsworth's *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.*

† Mr. Hamerton had been an unsuccessful candidate for the Professorship of Fine Art at Edinburgh University.

Will you remember me to Mrs. Hamerton and your son?—And believe, me, etc., etc.,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry [*July*, 1881]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I do believe I am better, mind and body; I am tired just now, for I have just been up the burn with Wogg, daily growing better and boo'f'ler; so do not judge my state by my style in this. I am working steady, four *Cornhill* pages scrolled every day, besides the correspondence about this chair, which is heavy in itself. My first story, *Thrawn Janet*, all in Scotch, is accepted by Stephen; my second, *The Body-Snatchers*, is laid aside in a justifiable disgust, the tale being horrid; my third, *The Merry Men*, I am more than half through, and think real well of. It is a fantastic sonata about the sea and wrecks; and I like it much above all my other attempts at story-telling; I think it is strange; if ever I shall make a hit, I have the line now, as I believe.

Fanny has finished one of hers, *The Shadow on the Bed*, and is now hammering at a second, for which we have "no name" as yet—not by Wilkie Collins.

Tales for Winter Nights. Yes, that, I think, we will call the lot of them when republished.

Why have you not sent me a testimonial? Everybody else but you has responded, and Symonds, but I'm afraid he's ill. Do think, too, if anybody else would write me a testimonial. I am told quantity goes far. I have good ones from Rev. Professor Campbell, Professor Meiklejohn, Leslie Stephen, Lang, Gosse, and a very shaky one from Hamerton.

Grant is an elector, so can't, but has written me kindly. From Tulloch I have not yet heard. Do help me with suggestions. This old chair, with its £250 and its light work, would make me.

It looks as if we should take Cater's chalet * after all; but O! to go back to that place, it seems cruel. I have not yet received the Landor; but it may be at home, detained by my mother, who returns to-morrow.

Believe me, dear Colvin, ever yours,

R. L. S.

Yours came; the class is in summer; many thanks for the testimonial, it is bully; arrived along with it another from Symonds, also bully; he is ill, but not lungs, thank God—fever got in Italy. We *have* taken Cater's chalet; so we are now the aristo.'s of the valley. There is no hope for me, but if there were, you would hear sweetness and light streaming from my lips.

The Merry Men

Chap. I. Eilean Aros.
II. What the Wreck had brought to Aros.
III. Past and Present in Sandag Bay.
IV. The Gale.
V. A Man out of the Sea.

} Tip Top Tale.

To W. E. Henley

Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, July, 1881

My dear Henley,—I hope, then, to have a visit from you. If before August, here; if later, at Braemar. Tupe!

And now, *mon bon,* I must babble about *The Merry Men,* my favorite work. It is a fantastic sonata about the sea and wrecks. Chapter I. "Eilean Aros"—the island, the roost, the "merry men," the three people there living—sea superstitions. Chapter II. "What the Wreck had brought to Aros." Eh, boy? what had it? Silver and clocks and brocades, and what a conscience,

* The Chalet am Stein (or Chalet Buol) at Davos.

what a mad brain! Chapter III. "Past and Present in Sandag Bay"—the new wreck and the old—so old—the Armada treasure-ship, Sant^ma Trini_d—the grave in the heather—strangers there. Chapter IV. "The Gale"—the doomed ship—the storm—the drunken madman on the head—cries in the night. Chapter V. "A Man out of the Sea." But I must not breathe to you my plot. It is, I fancy, my first real shoot at a story; an odd thing, sir, but, I believe, my own, though there is a little of Scott's *Pirate* in it, as how should there not? He had the root of romance in such places. Aros is Earraid, where I lived lang syne *; the Ross of Grisapol is the Ross of Mull; Ben Ryan, Ben More. I have written to the middle of Chapter IV. Like enough, when it is finished I shall discard all chapterings; for the thing is written straight through. It must, unhappily, be re-written—too well written not to be.

The chair is only three months in summer; that is why I try for it. If I get it, which I shall not, I should be independent at once. Sweet thought. I liked your Byron well; your Berlioz better. No one would remark these cuts; even I, who was looking for it, knew it not at all to be a torso. The paper strengthens me in my recommendation to you to follow Colvin's hint. Give us an 1830; you will do it well, and the subject smiles widely on the world:—

1830: *A Chapter of Artistic History,* by William Ernest Henley (or *of Social and Artistic History,* as the thing might grow to you). Sir, you might be in the Athenæum yet with that; and, believe me, you might and would be far better, the author of a readable book.
—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The following names have been invented for Wogg by his dear papa:—

* In the summer of 1870: see above; vol. I., letter dated Aug. 5, 1870, to Mrs. Thomas Stevenson, and the essay, *Memoirs of an Islet* in *Memories and Portraits.*

Grunty-pig (when he is scratched),
Rose-mouth (when he comes flying up with his rose-leaf tongue depending), and
Hoofen-boots (when he has had his foots wet).
How would *Tales for Winter Nights* do?

To W. E. Henley

The spell of good health did not last long, and with a break of the weather came a return of catarrhal troubles and hemorrhage. This letter answers some criticisms made by his correspondent on *The Merry Men* as drafted in MS.

Pitlochry, if you please [*August*] 1881

Dear Henley,—To answer a point or two. First, the Spanish ship was sloop-rigged and clumsy, because she was fitted out by some private adventurers, not over wealthy, and glad to take what they could get. Is that not right? Tell me if you think not. That, at least, was how I meant it. As for the boat-cloaks, I am afraid they are, as you say, false imagination; but I love the name, nature, and being of them so dearly, that I feel as if I would almost rather ruin a story than omit the reference. The proudest moments of my life have been passed in the stern-sheets of a boat with that romantic garment over my shoulders. This, without prejudice to one glorious day when standing upon some water stairs at Lerwick I signalled with my pocket-handkerchief for a boat to come ashore for me. I was then aged fifteen or sixteen; conceive my glory.

Several of the phrases you object to are proper nautical, or long-shore phrases, and therefore, I think, not out of place in this long-shore story. As for the two members which you thought at first so ill-united; I confess they seem perfectly so to me. I have chosen to sacrifice a long-projected story of adventure because the sentiment of that is identical with the sentiment of "My uncle." My uncle himself is not the story as I see it, only the leading episode of that story. It's really

a story of wrecks, as they appear to the dweller on the coast. It's a view of the sea. Goodness knows when I shall be able to re-write; I must first get over this copper-headed cold. R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The reference to Landor in the following is to a volume of mine in Mr. Morley's series of *English Men of Letters*. This and the next two or three years were those of the Fenian dynamite outrages at Clerkenwell Prison, the Tower of London, the House of Lords, etc.

[*Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, August*, 1881]

My dear Colvin,—This is the first letter I have written this good while. I have had a brutal cold, not perhaps very wisely treated; lots of blood—for me, I mean. I was so well, however, before, that I seem to be sailing through with it splendidly. My appetite never failed; indeed, as I got worse, it sharpened—a sort of reparatory instinct. Now I feel in a fair way to get round soon.

Monday, August (2*nd*, is it?).—We set out for the Spital of Glenshee, and reach Braemar on Tuesday. The Braemar address we cannot learn; it looks as if "Braemar" were all that was necessary; if particular, you can address 17 Heriot Row. We shall be delighted to see you whenever, and as soon as ever, you can make it possible.

. . . I hope heartily you will survive me, and do not doubt it. There are seven or eight people it is no part of my scheme in life to survive—yet if I could but heal me of my bellowses, I could have a jolly life—have it, even now, when I can work and stroll a little, as I have been doing till this cold. I have so many things to make life sweet to me, it seems a pity I cannot have that other one thing—health. But though you will be angry to hear it, I believe, for myself at least, what is is best. I believed it all through my worst days, and I am not ashamed to profess it now.

Landor has just turned up; but I had read him already. I like him extremely; I wonder if the "cuts" were perhaps not advantageous. It seems quite full enough; but then you know I am a compressionist.

If I am to criticise, it is a little staid; but the classical is apt to look so. It is in curious contrast to that inexpressive, unplanned wilderness of Forster's; clear, readable, precise, and sufficiently human. I see nothing lost in it, though I could have wished, in my Scotch capacity, a trifle clearer and fuller exposition of his moral attitude, which is not quite clear "from here."

He and his tyrannicide! I am in a mad fury about these explosions. If that is the new world! Damn O'Donovan Rossa; damn him behind and before, above, below, and roundabout; damn, deracinate, and destroy him, root and branch, self and company, world without end. Amen. I write that for sport if you like, but I will pray in earnest, O Lord, if you cannot convert, kindly delete him!

Stories naturally at halt. Henley has seen one and approves. I believe it to be good myself, even real good. He has also seen and approved one of Fanny's. It will make a good volume. We have now

Thrawn Janet (with Stephen), proof to-day.
The Shadow on the Bed (Fanny's copying).
The Merry Men (scrolled).
The Body-Snatchers (scrolled).

In germis
The Travelling Companion.
The Torn Surplice (*not final title*).

Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

Dr. Japp (known in literature at this date and for some time afterwards under his pseudonym H. A. Page; later under his own name the biographer of De Quincey) had written to R. L.

S. criticising statements of fact and opinion in his essay on Thoreau, and expressing the hope that they might meet and discuss their differences. In the interval between the last letter and this Stevenson with all his family had moved to Braemar.

The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar,
Sunday [*August*, 1881]

My dear Sir,—I should long ago have written to thank you for your kind and frank letter; but in my state of health papers are apt to get mislaid, and your letter has been vainly hunted for until this (Sunday) morning.

I regret I shall not be able to see you in Edinburgh; one visit to Edinburgh has already cost me too dear in that invaluable particular health; but if it should be at all possible for you to push on as far as Braemar, I believe you would find an attentive listener, and I can offer you a bed, a drive, and necessary food, etc.

If, however, you should not be able to come thus far, I can promise you two things: First, I shall religiously revise what I have written, and bring out more clearly the point of view from which I regard Thoreau; second, I shall in the Preface record your objection.

The point of view (and I must ask you not to forget that any such short paper is essentially only a *section through* a man) was this: I desired to look at the man through his books. Thus, for instance, when I mentioned his return to the pencil-making, I did it only in passing (perhaps I was wrong), because it seemed to me not an illustration of his principles, but a brave departure from them. Thousands of such there were I do not doubt; still, they might be hardly to my purpose, though, as you say so, some of them would be.

Our difference as to pity I suspect was a logomachy of my making. No pitiful acts on his part would surprise me; I know he would be more pitiful in practice than most of the whiners; but the spirit of that practice would still seem to be unjustly described by the word pity.

When I try to be measured, I find myself usually

suspected of a sneaking unkindness for my subject; but you may be sure, sir, I would give up most other things to be so good a man as Thoreau. Even my knowledge of him leads me thus far.

Should you find yourself able to push on to Braemar —it may even be on your way—believe me, your visit will be most welcome. The weather is cruel, but the place is, as I daresay you know, the very "wale" of Scotland—bar Tummelside.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mrs. Sitwell

The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar
[*August*, 1881]

. . . WELL, I have been pretty mean, but I have not yet got over my cold so completely as to have recovered much energy. It is really extraordinary that I should have recovered as well as I have in this blighting weather; the wind pipes, the rain comes in squalls, great black clouds are continually overhead, and it is as cold as March. The country is delightful, more cannot be said; it is very beautiful, a perfect joy when we get a blink of sun to see it in. The Queen knows a thing or two, I perceive, she has picked out the finest habitable spot in Britain.

I have done no work, and scarce written a letter for three weeks, but I think I should soon begin again; my cough is now very trifling. I eat well, and seem to have lost but little flesh in the meanwhile. I was *wonderfully* well before I caught this horrid cold. I never thought I should have been as well again; I really enjoyed life and work; and, of course, I now have a good hope that this may return.

I suppose you heard of our ghost stories. They are somewhat delayed by my cold and a bad attack of laziness, embroidery, etc., under which Fanny had been some time prostrate. It is horrid that we can get no

better weather. I did not get such good accounts of you as might have been. You must imitate me. I am now one of the most conscientious people at trying to get better you ever saw. I have a white hat, it is much admired; also a plaid, and a heavy stoop; so I take my walks abroad, witching the world.

Last night I was beaten at chess, and am still grinding under the blow.—Ever your faithful friend,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

The Cottage (late the late Miss M'Gregor's), Castleton of Braemar, August 10, 1881

My dear Gosse,—Come on the 24th, there is a dear fellow. Everybody else wants to come later, and it will be a godsend for, sir—Yours sincerely.

You can stay as long as you behave decently and are not sick of, sir—Your obedient, humble servant.

We have family worship in the home of, sir—Yours respectfully.

Braemar is a fine country, but nothing to (what you will also see) the maps of, sir—Yours in the Lord.

A carriage and two spanking hacks draw up daily at the hour of two before the house of, sir—Yours truly.

The rain rains and the winds do beat upon the cottage of the late Miss Macgregor and of, sir—Yours affectionately.

It is to be trusted that the weather may improve ere you know the halls of, sir—Yours emphatically.

All will be glad to welcome you, not excepting, sir—Yours ever.

You will now have gathered the lamentable intellectual collapse of, sir—Yours indeed.

And nothing remains for me but to sign myself, sir—Yours, Robert Louis Stevenson.

N.B.—Each of these clauses has to be read with extreme glibness, coming down whack upon the "Sir."

This is very important. The fine stylistic inspiration will else be lost.

I commit the man who made, the man who sold, and the woman who supplied me with my present excruciating gilt nib to that place where the worm never dies.

The reference to a deceased Highland lady (tending as it does to foster unavailing sorrow) may be with advantage omitted from the address, which would therefore run—The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar.

To Edmund Gosse

The Cottage, Castleton of Braemar,
August 19, 1881

If you had an uncle who was a sea captain and went to the North Pole, you had better bring his outfit. *Verbum Sapientibus.* I look towards you.

R. L. Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

[*Braemar, August* 19, 1881]

My dear Weg,—I have by an extraordinary drollery of Fortune sent off to you by this day's post a P.C. inviting you to appear in sealskin. But this had reference to the weather, and not at all, as you may have been led to fancy, to our rustic raiment of an evening.

As to that question, I would deal, in so far as in me lies, fairly with all men. We are not dressy people by nature; but it sometimes occurs to us to entertain angels. In the country, I believe, even angels may be decently welcomed in tweed; I have faced many great personages, for my own part, in a tasteful suit of sea-cloth with an end of carpet pending from my gullet. Still, we do maybe twice a summer burst out in the direction of blacks—and yet we do it seldom. In short,

let your own heart decide, and the capacity of your portmanteau. If you came in camel's hair, you would still, although conspicuous, be welcome.

The sooner the better after Tuesday—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

The following records the beginning of work upon *Treasure Island*, the name originally proposed for which was the *Sea Cook*.

[*Braemar, August* 25, 1881]

MY DEAR HENLEY,—Of course I am a rogue. Why, Lord, it's known, man; but you should remember I have had a horrid cold. Now, I'm better, I think; and see here—nobody, not you, nor Lang, nor the devil, will hurry me with our crawlers. They are coming. Four of them are as good as done, and the rest will come when ripe; but I am now on another lay for the moment, purely owing to Lloyd, this one; but I believe there's more coin in it than in any amount of crawlers: now, see here, *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Story for Boys.*

If this don't fetch the kids, why, they have gone rotten since my day. Will you be surprised to learn that it is about Buccaneers, that it begins in the "Admiral Benbow" public-house on the Devon coast, that it's all about a map, and a treasure, and a mutiny, and a derelict ship, and a current, and a fine old Squire Trelawney (the real Tre, purged of literature and sin, to suit the infant mind), and a doctor, and another doctor, and a sea-cook with one leg, and a sea-song with the chorus "Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum" (at the third Ho you heave at the capstan bars), which is a real buccaneer's song, only known to the crew of the late Captain Flint (died of rum at Key West, much regretted, friends will please accept this intimation); and lastly, would you be surprised to hear, in this con-

nection, the name of *Routledge?* That's the kind of man I am, blast your eyes. Two chapters are written, and have been tried on Lloyd with great success; the trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths—bricks without straw. But youth and the fond parent have to be consulted.

And now look here—this is next day—and three chapters are written and read. (Chapter I. The Old Sea-dog at the "Admiral Benbow." Chapter II. Black Dog appears and disappears. Chapter III. The Black Spot.) All now heard by Lloyd, F., and my father and mother, with high approval. It's quite silly and horrid fun, and what I want is the *best* book about the Buccaneers that can be had—the latter B's above all, Blackbeard and sich, and get Nutt or Bain to send it skimming by the fastest post. And now I know you'll write to me, for *The Sea Cook's* sake.

Your Admiral Guinea is curiously near my line, but of course I'm fooling; and your Admiral sounds like a shublime gent. Stick to him like wax—he'll do. My Trelawney is, as I indicate, several thousand sea-miles off the lie of the original or your Admiral Guinea; and besides, I have no more about him yet but one mention of his name, and I think it likely he may turn yet farther from the model in the course of handling. A chapter a day I mean to do; they are short; and perhaps in a month *The Sea Cook* may to Routledge go, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! My Trelawney has a strong dash of Landor, as I see him from here. No women in the story, Lloyd's orders; and who so blythe to obey? It's awful fun boys' stories; you just indulge the pleasure of your heart, that's all; no trouble, no strain. The only stiff thing is to get it ended—that I don't see, but I look to a volcano. O sweet, O generous, O human toils. You would like my blind beggar in Chapter III. I believe; no writing, just drive along as the words come and the pen will scratch!

R. L. S.
Author of Boys' Stories

To Dr. Alexander Japp

This correspondent had paid his visit as proposed, discussed the Thoreau differences, listened delightedly to the first chapters of *Treasure Island*, and proposed to offer the story for publication to his friend Mr. Henderson, proprietor and editor of *Young Folks*.

[*Braemar, September*, 1881]

My dear Dr. Japp,—My father has gone, but I think I may take it upon me to ask you to keep the book. Of all things you could do to endear yourself to me, you have done the best, for my father and you have taken a fancy to each other.

I do not know how to thank you for all your kind trouble in the matter of *The Sea Cook*, but I am not unmindful. My health is still poorly, and I have added intercostal rheumatism—a new attraction—which sewed me up nearly double for two days, and still gives me a list to starboard—let us be ever nautical!

I do not think with the start I have there will be any difficulty in letting Mr. Henderson go ahead whenever he likes. I will write my story up to its legitimate conclusion; and then we shall be in a position to judge whether a sequel would be desirable, and I would then myself know better about its practicability from the story-teller's point of view.—Yours ever very sincerely,

R. L. Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

This tells of the further progress of *Treasure Island*, of the price paid for it, and of the modest hopes with which it was launched. "The poet" is Mr. Gosse. The project of a highway story, *Jerry Abershaw*, remained a favourite one with Stevenson, until it was superseded three or four years later by another, that of the *Great North Road*, which in its turn had to be abandoned, from lack of health and leisure, after some six or eight chapters had been written.

Braemar, September, 1881

My dear Henley,—Thanks for your last. The £100 fell through, or dwindled at least into somewhere about

£30. However, that I've taken as a mouthful, so you may look out for *The Sea Cook, or Treasure Island: A Tale of the Buccaneers,* in *Young Folks.* (The terms are £2, 10s. a page of 450 words; that's not noble, is it? But I have my copyright safe. I don't get illustrated — a blessing; that's the price I have to pay for my copyright.)

I'll make this boys' book business pay; but I have to make a beginning. When I'm done with *Young Folks,* I'll try Routledge or some one. I feel pretty sure the *Sea Cook* will do to reprint, and bring something decent at that.

Japp is a good soul. The poet was very gay and pleasant. He told me much: he is simply the most active young man in England, and one of the most intelligent. "He shall o'er Europe, shall o'er earth extend." * He is now extending over adjacent parts of Scotland.

I propose to follow up *The Sea Cook* at proper intervals by *Jerry Abershaw: A Tale of Putney Heath* (which or its site I must visit), *The Leading Light: A Tale of the Coast, The Squaw Men: or the Wild West,* and other instructive and entertaining work. *Jerry Abershaw* should be good, eh? I love writing boys' books. This first is only an experiment: wait till you see what I can make 'em with my hand in. I'll be the Harrison Ainsworth of the future; and a chalk better by St. Christopher; or at least as good. You'll see that even by *The Sea Cook.*

Jerry Abershaw—O what a title! Jerry Abershaw: d—n it, sir, it's a poem. The two most lovely words in English; and what a sentiment! Hark you, how the hoofs ring! Is this a blacksmith's? No, it's a wayside inn. Jerry Abershaw. "It was a clear, frosty evening, not 100 miles from Putney," etc. Jerry Abershaw. Jerry Abershaw. Jerry Abershaw. *The Sea Cook* is now in its sixteenth chapter, and bids for well up in the

* From Landor's *Gebir:* the line refers to Napoleon Bonaparte.

thirties. Each three chapters is worth £2, 10s. So we've £12, 10s. already.

Don't read Marryat's *Pirate* anyhow; it is written in sand with a salt-spoon: arid, feeble, vain, tottering production. But then we're not always all there. *He* was *all* somewhere else that trip. It's *damnable*, Henley. I don't go much on *The Sea Cook;* but, Lord, it's a little fruitier than the *Pirate* by Cap'n. Marryat.

Since this was written *The Cook* is in his nineteenth chapter. Yo-heave ho! R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson's uncle, Dr. George Balfour, had recommended him to wear a specially contrived and hideous respirator for the inhalation of pine-oil.

Braemar, 1881

Dear Henley, with a pig's snout on
I am starting for London,
Where I likely shall arrive,
On Saturday, if still alive:
Perhaps your pirate doctor might
See me on Sunday? If all's right,
I should then lunch with you and with she
Who's dearer to you than you are to me.
I shall remain but little time
In London, as a wretched clime,
But not so wretched (for none are)
As that of beastly old Braemar.
My doctor sends me skipping. I
Have many facts to meet your eye.
My pig's snout's now upon my face;
And I inhale with fishy grace,
My gills outflapping right and left,
Ol. pin. sylvest. I am bereft
Of a great deal of charm by this—
Not quite the bull's eye for a kiss—
But like the gnome of olden time
Or bogey in a pantomime.

For ladies' love I once was fit,
But now am rather out of it.
Where'er I go, revolted curs
Snap round my military spurs;
The children all retire in fits
And scream their bellowses to bits.
Little I care: the worst's been done:
Now let the cold impoverished sun
Drop frozen from his orbit; let
Fury and fire, cold, wind and wet,
And cataclysmal mad reverses
Rage through the federate universes;
Let Lawson triumph, cakes and ale,
Whisky and hock and claret fail;—
Tobacco, love, and letters perish,
With all that any man could cherish:
You it may touch, not me. I dwell
Too deep already—deep in hell;
And nothing can befall, O damn!
To make me uglier than I am.

R. L. S.

This-yer refers to an ori-nasal respirator for the inhalation of pine-wood oil, *oleum pini sylvestris*.

To Thomas Stevenson

With all his throat and lung troubles actively renewed, Stevenson fled to Davos again in October. This time he and his wife and stepson occupied a small house by themselves, the Chalet am Stein, near the Buol Hotel. The election to the Edinburgh Professorship was still pending, and the following note to his father shows that he thought for a moment of giving the electors a specimen of his qualifications in the shape of a magazine article on the Appin murder—a theme afterwards turned to more vital account in the tales of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, October*, 1881]

My dear Father,—It occurred to me last night in bed that I could write

The Murder of Red Colin,
A Story of the Forfeited Estates.

This I have all that is necessary for, with the following exceptions:—

Trials of the Sons of Rob Roy with Anecdotes: Edinburgh, 1818, and

The second volume of *Blackwood's Magazine.*

You might also look in Arnot's *Criminal Trials* up in my room, and see what observations he has on the case (Trial of James Stewart in Appin for murder of Campbell of Glenure, 1752); if he has none, perhaps you could see—O yes, see if Burton has it in his two vols. of trial stories. I hope he hasn't; but care not; do it over again anyway.

The two named authorities I must see. With these, I could soon pull off this article; and it shall be my first for the electors.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Some of the habitual readers of *Young Folks* had written objecting to the early instalments of *Treasure Island,* and the editor had come forward in their defence.

Davos Printing Office, managed by Samuel Lloyd Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [*Nov.,* 9, 1881]

Dear Weg,—If you are taking *Young Folks,* for God's Sake Twig the editorial style; it is incredible; we are all left panting in the rear; twig, O Twig it. His name is Clinton; I should say the most melodious prosewriter now alive; it's like buttermilk and blacking; it sings and hums away in that last sheet, like a great old kettle full of bilge water. You know; none of us could do it, boy. See No. 571, last page: an article called "Sir Claude the Conqueror," and read it *aloud* in your best rhythmic tones; mon cher, c'est épatant.

Observe in the same number, how Will J. Shannon girds at your poor friend; and how the rhythmic Clinton steps chivalrously forth in his defence. First the Rev. Purcell; then Will J. Shannon: thick fall the barbèd arrows.*

I wish I could play a game of chess with you.

If I survive, I shall have Clinton to dinner: it is plain I must make hay while the sun shines; I shall not long keep a footing in the world of penny writers, or call them obolists. It is a world full of surprises, a romantic world. Weg, I was known there; even I. The obolists, then, sometimes peruse our works. It is only fair; since I so much batten upon theirs. Talking of which, in Heaven's name, get *The Bondage of Brandon* (3 vols.) by Bracebridge Hemming. It's the devil and all for drollery. There is a Superior (sic) of the Jesuits, straight out of Skelt.

And now look here, I had three points: Clinton—disposed of—(2nd) Benj. Franklin—do you want him? (3rd) A radiant notion begot this morning over an atlas: why not, you who know the lingo, give us a good legendary and historical book on Iceland? It would, or should, be as romantic as a book of Scott's; as strange and stirring as a dream. Think on't. My wife screamed with joy at the idea; and the little Lloyd clapped his hands; so I offer you three readers on the spot.

Fanny and I have both been in bed, tended by the hired sick nurse; Lloyd has a broken finger (so he did not clap his hands literally); Wogg has had an abscess in his ear; our servant is a devil.—I am yours ever, with both of our best regards to Mrs. Gosse,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

The Rejected Obolist

*The Editor's defence was in the following terms:—"That which you condemn is really the best story now appearing in the paper, and the impress of an able writer is stamped on every paragraph of *The Treasure Island*. You will probably share this opinion when you have read a little more of it."

To Thomas Stevenson

Davos Printing Office Managed by Samuel Lloyd Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [*Nov.* 1881]

My dear Father,—I believe I agree with all your statements, except your clinging to *Knox* and your doubt of *Pepys*. I tell you the Knoxes are an error; it would be far better to keep them back and work them into a life of Knox some day: there is no readable life of him; and these are as dull as McCrie. I do not think *Yoshida* should go out, because the facts are interesting and the paper short.

I have, of course, written to Macmillan but I protest.

All my corrected proofs are lost and I must fall to them again from *Whitman* onward. I am confined to the house with a very bad cold which puts all to a stand, at a time when I cannot certainly afford delay. I keep up very well; but yesterday forenoon I never ceased to cough which made me completely useless.

I have written to Whyte, I hope properly: "more than generous" I said, which was within the mark. I agree that they will do me no good. It is an odd list of names Ch. of England, Ch. of Scotland, Free Kirk, Pessimist, radical, tory, certainly I am not a party man.

Clarke, I fear, must have patience. I shall be as quick as I can, but I cannot command health and occasion. I am fairly staggering under things to do, and can get none of them done: but nothing so much as a block of this sort depresses the conscience. Morbid action, I believe; as long as you advance a little, you should not mind.

This winter I mean to write an article on Burt, Boswell, Mrs. Grant & Scott. O! I believe there is a book on Benjamin Franklin, by Parton, the author of Voltaire's life. If there is, send it; if there is not, send me the next best thing: not Bigelow, which I have. Douglas & Foulis will have to ask; as it will be an American book, I am sure.

Please send my testimonials to

Mrs. Betty Patterson, Clayton, Hendricks County, Indiana, U.S.A.
to Mrs. Nelly VdeG. Sanchez. Monterey, Monterey Co., Cal., U.S.A.
and Mrs. Virgil Williams, Art Association Rooms, Pine Street, San Francisco.

Please let us have two or three.
Gosse's address, for my mother is
29 Delamere Terrace
London W.

Ever your afft. son,
R. L. S.

I have been worse since this was written and I own I quite forgot my letter. To-day, I feel greatly better. Weather shocking.

To W. E. Henley

This letter speaks of contributions to the *Magazine of Art* (in these years edited by Mr. Henley) from J. A. Symonds and from R. L. S. himself, "Bunyan" meaning the essay on the cuts in Bagster's edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. A toy press had just been set up in the chalet for the lad Lloyd Osbourne.

Davos Printing Office, managed by Samuel Lloyd Osbourne & Co., The Chalet [*Nov.*, 1881]

Dear Henley,—I have done better for you than you deserved to hope; the Venice Medley is withdrawn; and I have a Monte Oliveto (short) for you, with photographs and sketches. I think you owe luck a candle; for this no skill could have accomplished without the aid of accident.

How about carving and gilding? I have nearly killed myself over Bunyan; and am too tired to finish him to-day, as I might otherwise have done. For his back is broken. For some reason, it proved one of the hardest things I ever tried to write; perhaps—but no—I

have no theory to offer—it went against the spirit. But as I say I girt my loins up and nearly died of it.

In five weeks, six at the latest, I should have a complete proof of *Treasure Island*. It will be from 75 to 80,000 words; and with anything like half good pictures, it should sell. I suppose I may at least hope for eight pie's? I aspire after ten or twelve. You had better.

—Two days later.

Bunyan skips to-day, pretty bad, always with an official letter. Yours came last night. I had already spotted your Dickens; very pleasant and true.

My wife is far from well; quite confined to bed now; drain poisoning. I keep getting better slowly; appetite dicky; but some days I feel and eat well. The weather has been hot and heartless and unDavosy.

I shall give Symonds his note in about an hour from now.

Have done so: he will write Vesalius and of Botticelli's Dante for you.

Morris's Sigurd is a grrrrreat poem; that is so. I have cried aloud at this re-reading; he had fine stuff to go on, but he has touched it, in places, with the hand of a master. Yes. Regin and Fafnir are incredibly fine.

Love to all.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To P. G. Hamerton

The volume of republished essays here mentioned is *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. "The silly story of the election" refers again to his correspondent's failure as a candidate for the Edinburgh Chair of Fine Arts.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, December*, 1881]

My dear Mr. Hamerton,—My conscience has long been smiting me, till it became nearly chronic. My excuses, however, are many and not pleasant. Almost immediately after I last wrote to you, I had a hemorreage (I can't spell it), was badly treated by a doctor

in the country, and have been a long while picking up —still, in fact, have much to desire on that side. Next, as soon as I got here, my wife took ill; she is, I fear, seriously so; and this combination of two invalids very much depresses both.

I have a volume of republished essays coming out with Chatto and Windus; I wish they would come, that my wife might have the reviews to divert her. Otherwise my news is *nil*. I am up here in a little chalet, on the borders of a pine-wood, overlooking a great part of the Davos Thal, a beautiful scene at night, with the moon upon the snowy mountains, and the lights warmly shining in the village. J. A. Symonds is next door to me, just at the foot of my Hill Difficulty (this you will please regard as the House Beautiful), and his society is my great stand-by.

Did you see I had joined the band of the rejected? "Hardly one of us," said my *confrères* at the bar.

I was blamed by a common friend for asking you to give me a testimonial; in the circumstances he thought it was indelicate. Lest, by some calamity, you should ever have felt the same way, I must say in two words how the matter appeared to me. That silly story of the election altered in no tittle the value of your testimony: so much for that. On the other hand, it led me to take quite a particular pleasure in asking you to give it: and so much for the other. I trust, even if you cannot share it, you will understand my view.

I am in treaty with Bentley for a life of Hazlitt: I hope it will not fall through, as I love the subject, and appear to have found a publisher who loves it also. That, I think, makes things more pleasant. You know I am a fervent Hazlittite; I mean regarding him as *the* English writer who has had the scantiest justice. Besides which, I am anxious to write biography; really, if I understand myself in quest of profit, I think it must be good to live with another man from birth to death. You have tried it, and know.

How has the cruising gone? Pray remember me to

Mrs. Hamerton and your son, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Charles Baxter

The memory here evoked of Brash the publican, who had been a special butt for some of the youthful pranks of R. L. S. and his friends, inspired in the next few weeks the sets of verses mentioned below, in letters which show that the fictitious Johnson and Thomson were far from being dead.

[*Chalet am Stein*], *Davos, December* 5, 1881

MY DEAR CHARLES,—We have been in miserable case here; my wife worse and worse: and now sent away with Lloyd for sick nurse, I not being allowed to go down. I do not know what is to become of us; and you may imagine how rotten I have been feeling, and feel now, alone with my weasel-dog and my German maid, on the top of a hill here, heavy mist and thin snow all about me, and the devil to pay in general. I don't care so much for solitude as I used to; results, I suppose, of marriage.

Pray write me something cheery. A little Edinburgh gossip, in Heaven's name. Ah! what would I not give to steal this evening with you through the big, echoing, college archway, and away south under the street lamps, and away to dear Brash's, now defunct! But the old time is dead also, never, never to revive. It was a sad time too, but so gay and so hopeful, and we had such sport with all our low spirits and all our distresses, that it looks like a kind of lamp-lit fairyland behind me. O for ten Edinburgh minutes—sixpence between us, and the ever-glorious Lothian Road, or dear mysterious Leith Walk! But here, a sheer hulk, lies poor Tom Bowling; here in this strange place, whose very strangeness would have been heaven to him then; and aspires, yes, C. B., with tears, after the past. See what comes of being left alone. Do you remember Brash? the sheet

of glass that we followed along George Street? Granton? the night at Bonny mainhead? the compass near the sign of the *Twinkling Eye?* the night I lay on the pavement in misery?

I swear it by the eternal sky
Johnson—nor—Thomson ne'er shall die!

Yet I fancy they are dead too; dead like Brash.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The next is after going down to meet his wife and stepson, when the former had left the doctor's hands at Berne.

Chalet Buol, Davos-Platz, December 26, 1881

My dear Mother,—Yesterday, Sunday and Christmas, we finished this eventful journey by a drive in an *open* sleigh—none others were to be had—seven hours on end through whole forests of Christmas trees. The cold was beyond belief. I have often suffered less at a dentist's. It was a clear, sunny day, but the sun even at noon falls, at this season, only here and there into the Prättigau. I kept up as long as I could in an imitation of a street singer:—

"Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses," etc.

At last Lloyd remarked, a blue mouth speaking from a corpse-coloured face, "You seem to be the only one with any courage left!" And, do you know, with that word my courage disappeared, and I made the rest of the stage in the same dumb wretchedness as the others. My only terror was lest Fanny should ask for brandy, or laudanum, or something. So awful was the idea of putting my hands out, that I half thought I would refuse.

Well, none of us are a penny the worse, Lloyd's cold better; I, with a twinge of the rheumatiz; and Fanny better than her ordinary.

General conclusion between Lloyd and me as to the journey: A prolonged visit to the dentist's, complicated with the fear of death.

Never, O never, do you get me there again.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Mr. Gosse and R. L. S. had proposed to Mr. R. W. Gilder of the *Century Magazine* that they should collaborate for him on a series of murder papers, beginning with the Elstree murder; and he had accepted the proposal on terms which they thought liberal.

Hotel Buol, Davos, Dec. 26th, 1881

My dear Gosse,—I have just brought my wife back, through such cold, in an open sleigh too, as I had never fancied to exist. I won't use the word torture, but go to your dentist's and in nine cases out of ten you will not suffer more pain than we suffered.

This is merely in acknowledgment of your editorial: to say that I shall give my mind at once to the Murder. But I bethink me you can say so much and convey my sense of the liberality of our Cousins, without exhibiting this scrawl. So I may go on to tell you that I have at last found a publisher as eager to publish, as I am to write a Hazlitt. Bentley is the Boy; and very liberal, at least, as per last advices; certainly very friendly and eager, which makes work light, like whistling. I wish I was with the rest of—well, of us—in the red books. But I am glad to get a whack at Hazlitt, howsoe'er.

How goes your *Gray?* I would not change with you; brother! Gray would never be suited to my temperament, while Hazlitt fits me like a glove.

I hope in your studies in *Young Folks* you did not miss the delicious reticences, the artistic concealments, and general fine-shade graduation, through which the fact of the Xmas Nr. being 3d. was instilled—too strong—inspired into the mind of the readers. It was superb.

I may add as a postscript: I wish to God I or anybody knew what was the matter with my wife.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To MRS. SITWELL

[*Hotel Buol, Davos,* 1882]

My dear, thank you for your letter. I am in the blackness of low spirits to-night, for Fanny has had a sharp relapse, and I have hurt my dog, and bust my own knee. We have been both in bed again for near a week; but I am up, though wretched. I will not write much more, for I should fear to say what I really felt. Mrs. D. is condemned; poor little D. out here again, so wretched: Symonds' oldest daughter ill; his wife and he both wild in consequence. I write out of a dark cloud. But though I have no pleasant news to give you, and little spirit to write at all, I wished only to tell you that I am

Yours always the same,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To ALISON CUNNINGHAM

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February,* 1882]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—My wife and I are very much vexed to hear you are still unwell. We are both keeping far better; she especially seems quite to have taken a turn—*the* turn, we shall hope. Please let us know how you get on, and what has been the matter with you; Braemar I believe—the vile hole. You know what a lazy rascal I am, so you won't be surprised at a short letter, I know; indeed, you will be much more surprised at my having had the decency to write at all. We have got rid of our young, pretty, and incompetent maid; and now we have a fine, canny, twinkling, shrewd, auld-farrant peasant body, who gives us good food and

keeps us in good spirits. If we could only understand what she says! But she speaks Davos language, which is to German what Aberdeen-awa' is to English, so it comes heavy. God bless you, my dear Cummy; and so says Fanny forbye.—Ever your affectionate,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To CHARLES BAXTER

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos*], 22*nd February*, '82

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Your most welcome letter has raised clouds of sulphur from my horizon. . . .

I am glad you have gone back to your music. Life is a poor thing, I am more and more convinced, without an art, that always waits for us and is always new. Art and marriage are two very good stand-by's.

In an article which will appear some time in the *Cornhill*, *Talk and Talkers*, and where I have full-lengthened the conversation of Bob, Henley, Jenkin, Simpson, Symonds, and Gosse, I have at the end one single word about yourself. It may amuse you to see it.

We are coming to Scotland after all, so we shall meet, which pleases me, and I do believe I am strong enough to stand it this time. My knee is still quite lame.

My wife is better again. . . . But we take it by turns; it is the dog that is ill now.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

I was considering whether to undertake the volume on Keats for Morley's *English Men of Letters*. The *Gossip on Romance* did not appear until the next November—in *Longman's Magazine*. *The Adventures of John Delafield* never came into being.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February*, 1882]

DEAR COLVIN,—About Keats—well yes, I wonder; I see all your difficulties and yet, I have the strongest

kind of feeling that critical biography is your real vein. The Landor was one nail; another, I think, would be good for you and the public. Indeed I would do the Keats. He *is* worth doing; it is a brave and a sad little story, and the critical part lies deep in the very vitals of art. All summed, I would do him; remember it is but a small order alongside of Landor; and £100, and kudos, and a good word for the poor great lad, who will otherwise fall among the molluscs. Up, heart! give me a John Keats! Houghton, though he has done it with grace, has scarce done it with grip.

I have put you into *Talk and Talkers* sure enough. God knows, I hope I shall offend nobody; I do begin to quake mightily over that paper. I have a *Gossip on Romance* about done; it puts some real criticism in a light way, I think. It is destined for Longman who (dead secret) is bringing out a new Mag. (6d.) in the Autumn. Dead Secret: all his letters are three deep with masks and passwords, and I swear on a skull daily. F. has re-read *Treasure Id.*, against which she protested; and now she thinks the end about as good as the beginning; only some six chapters situate about the midst of the tale to be rewritten. This sounds hopefuller. My new long story, *The Adventures of John Delafield,* is largely planned.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

In the early months of this year a hurt knee kept Stevenson more indoors than was good for him.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, February,* 1882]

My dear Henley,—Here comes the letter as promised last night. And first two requests: Pray send the enclosed to c/o Blackmore's publisher, 'tis from Fanny; second, pray send us Routledge's shilling book, Edward Mayhew's *Dogs,* by return if it can be managed.

Our dog is very ill again, poor fellow, looks very ill

too, only sleeps at night because of morphine; and we do not know what ails him, only fear it to be canker of the ear. He makes a bad, black spot in our life, poor, selfish, silly, little tangle; and my wife is wretched. Otherwise she is better, steadily and slowly moving up through all her relapses. My knee never gets the least better; it hurts to-night, which it has not done for long. I do not suppose my doctor knows any least thing about it. He says it is a nerve that I struck, but I assure you he does not know.

I have just finished a paper, *A Gossip on Romance*, in which I have tried to do, very popularly, about one-half of the matter you wanted me to try. In a way, I have found an answer to the question. But the subject was hardly fit for so chatty a paper, and it is all loose ends. If ever I do my book on the Art of Literature, I shall gather them together and be clear.

To-morrow, having once finished off the touches still due on this, I shall tackle *San Francisco* for you. Then the tide of work will fairly bury me, lost to view and hope. You have no idea what it costs me to wring out my work now. I have certainly been a fortnight over this *Romance*, sometimes five hours a day: and yet it is about my usual length—eight pages or so, and would be a d—d sight the better for another curry. But I do not think I can honestly rewrite it all; so I call it done, and shall only straighten words in a revision currently.

I had meant to go on for a great while, and say all manner of entertaining things. But all's gone. I am now an idiot.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The following flight of fancy refers to supposed errors of judgment on the part of an eminent firm of publishers, with whom Stevenson had at this time no connection. Very soon afterwards he entered into relations with them which proved equally pleasant and profitable to both parties, and were continued on the most cordial terms until his death.

Chalet am Stein, Davos, March, 1882

My dear Henley,—Last night we had a dinner-party consisting of the John Addington, curry, onions (lovely onions), and beefsteak. So unusual is any excitement, that F. and I feel this morning as if we had been to a coronation. However I must, I suppose, write.

I was sorry about your female contributor squabble. 'Tis very comic, but really unpleasant. But what care I? Now that I illustrate my own books, I can always offer you a situation in our house—S. L. Osbourne and Co. As an author gets a halfpenny a copy of verses, and an artist a penny a cut, perhaps a proof-reader might get several pounds a year.

O that Coronation! What a shouting crowd there was! I obviously got a firework in each eye. The king looked very magnificent, to be sure; and that great hall where we feasted on seven hundred delicate foods, and drank fifty royal wines—*quel coup d'œil!* but was it not overdone, even for a coronation—almost a vulgar luxury? And eleven is certainly too late to begin dinner. (It was really 6.30 instead of 5.30.)

Your list of books that Cassells have refused in these weeks is not quite complete; they also refused—

1. Six undiscovered Tragedies, one romantic Comedy, a fragment of Journal extending over six years, and an unfinished Autobiography reaching up to the first performance of King John. By William Shakespeare.

2. The Journals and Private Correspondence of David, King of Israel.

3. Poetical Works of Arthur, Iron Dook of Wellington, including a Monody on Napoleon.

4. Eight books of an unfinished novel, *Solomon Crabb.* By Henry Fielding.

5. Stevenson's Moral Emblems.

You also neglected to mention, as *per contra,* that they had during the same time accepted and triumphantly published Brown's *Handbook to Cricket,* Jones's *First French Reader,* and Robinson's *Pictur-*

esque Cheshire, uniform with the same author's *Stately Homes of Salop.*

O if that list could come true! How we would tear at *Solomon Crabb!* O what a bully, bully, bully business. Which would you read first—Shakespeare's Autobiography, or his journals? What sport the Monody on Napoleon would be—what wooden verse, what stucco ornament! I should read both the autobiography and the journals before I looked at one of the plays, beyond the names of them, which shows that Saintsbury was bright, and I do care more for life than for poetry. No—I take it back. Do you know one of the tragedies—a Bible tragedy too—*David*—was written in his third period—much about the same time as *Lear?* The comedy, *April Rain,* is also a late work. *Beckett* is a fine ranting piece, like *Richard II.*, but very fine for the stage. Irving is to play it this autumn when I'm in town; the part rather suits him—but who is to play Henry—a tremendous creation, sir. Betterton in his private journal seems to have seen this piece; and he says distinctly that Henry is the best part in any play. "Though," he adds, "how it be with the ancient plays I know not. But in this I have ever feared to do ill, and indeed will not be persuaded to that undertaking." So says Betterton. *Rufus* is not so good; I am not pleased with *Rufus;* plainly a *rifaccimento* of some inferior work; but there are some damned fine lines. As for the purely satiric ill-minded *Abelard and Heloise,* another *Troilus,—quoi!* it is not pleasant, truly, but what strength, what verve, what knowledge of life, and the Canon! What a finished, humorous, rich picture is the Canon! Ah, there was nobody like Shakespeare. But what I like is the David and Absalom business: Absalom is so well felt—you love him as David did; David's speech is one roll of royal music from the first act to the fifth.

I am enjoying *Solomon Crabb* extremely; Solomon's capital adventure with the two highwaymen and Squire Trecothick and Parson Vance; it is as good, I think,

as anything in *Joseph Andrews*. I have just come to the part where the highwayman with the black patch over his eye has tricked poor Solomon into his place, and the squire and the parson are hearing the evidence. Parson Vance is splendid. How good, too, is old Mrs. Crabb and the coast-guardsman in the third chapter, or her delightful quarrel with the sexton of Seaham; Lord Conybeare is surely a little overdone; but I don't know either; he's such damned fine sport. Do you like Sally Barnes? I'm in love with her. Constable Muddon is as good as Dogberry and Verges put together; when he takes Solomon to the cage, and the highwayman gives him Solomon's own guinea for his pains, and kisses Mrs. Muddon, and just then up drives Lord Conybeare, and instead of helping Solomon, calls him all the rascals in Christendom—O Henry Fielding, Henry Fielding! Yet perhaps the scenes at Seaham are the best. But I'm bewildered among all these excellences.

Stay, cried a voice that made the welkin crack—
This here's a dream, return and study BLACK!—
Ever yours, R. L. S.

TO ALEXANDER IRELAND

The following is in reply to a letter Stevenson had received on some questions connected with his proposed Life of Hazlitt from the veteran critic and bibliographer, since deceased, Mr. Alexander Ireland. At the foot is to be found the first reference to his new amusement of wood engraving for the Davos Press.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March,* 1882]

MY DEAR SIR,—This formidable paper need not alarm you; it argues nothing beyond penury of other sorts, and is not at all likely to lead me into a long letter. If I were at all grateful it would, for yours has just passed for me a considerable part of a stormy evening. And speaking of gratitude, let me at once and with becoming eagerness accept your kind invitation to

Bowdon. I shall hope, if we can agree as to dates when I am nearer hand, to come to you sometime in the month of May. I was pleased to hear you were a Scot; I feel more at home with my compatriots always; perhaps the more we are away, the stronger we feel that bond.

You ask about Davos; I have discoursed about it already, rather sillily I think, in the *Pall Mall*, and I mean to say no more, but the ways of the Muse are dubious and obscure, and who knows? I may be wiled again. As a place of residence, beyond a splendid climate, it has to my eyes but one advantage—the neighbourhood of J. A. Symonds—I daresay you know his work, but the man is far more interesting. It has done me, in my two winters' Alpine exile, much good; so much, that I hope to leave it now for ever, but would not be understood to boast. In my present unpardonably crazy state, any cold might send me skipping, either back to Davos, or further off. Let us hope not. It is dear; a little dreary: very far from many things that both my taste and my needs prompt me to seek; and altogether not the place that I should choose of my free will.

I am chilled by your description of the man in question, though I had almost argued so much from his cold and undigested volume. If the republication does not interfere with my publisher, it will not interfere with me; but there, of course, comes the hitch. I do not know Mr. Bentley, and I fear all publishers like the devil from legend and experience both. However, when I come to town, we shall, I hope, meet and understand each other as well as author and publisher ever do. I liked his letters; they seemed hearty, kind, and personal. Still—I am notedly suspicious of the trade—your news of this republication alarms me.

The best of the present French novelists seems to me, incomparably, Daudet. *Les Rois en Exil* comes very near being a masterpiece. For Zola I have no toleration, though the curious, eminently bourgeois, and

eminently French creature has power of a kind. But I would he were deleted. I would not give a chapter of old Dumas (meaning himself, not his collaborators) for the whole boiling of the Zolas. Romance with the smallpox—as the great one: diseased anyway and blackhearted and fundamentally at enmity with joy.

I trust that Mrs. Ireland does not object to smoking; and if you are a tectotaller, I beg you to mention it before I come—I have all the vices; some of the virtues also, let us hope—that, at least, of being a Scotchman, and yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—My father was in the old High School the last year, and walked in the procession to the new. I blush to own I am an Academy boy; it seems modern, and smacks not of the soil.

P.P.S.—I enclose a good joke—at least, I think so—my first efforts at wood-engraving printed by my stepson, a boy of thirteen. I will put in also one of my later attempts. I have been nine days at the art—observe my progress. R. L. S.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, March,* 1882]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Herewith *Moral Emblems.* The elephant by Fanny—the rest by me.

I would have sent it long ago. But I must explain. I brought home with me from my bad times in America two strains of unsoundness of mind, the first, a perpetual fear that I can do no more work—the second, a perpetual fear that my friends have quarrelled with me. I struggle as hard as I know how against both, but a judicious postcard would sometimes save me the expense of the second. This last long silence of yours drove me into really believing it, and I dared not write to you.

Well, it's ancient history now, and here are the emblems. A second series is in the press.

Silverado is still unfinished; but I think I have done well on the whole, as you say. I shall be home, I hope, sometime in May, perhaps before; it depends on Fanny's health, which is still far from good and often alarms me. I shall then see your collections. I shall not put pen to paper till I settle somewhere else; Hazlitt had better simmer a while. I have to see Ireland too, who has most kindly written to me and invited me to see his collections.

Symonds grows much on me; in many ways, what you would least expect, a very sound man, and very wise in a wise way. It is curious how F. and I always turn to him for advice: we have learned that his advice is good.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Gosse

Mrs. Gosse had sent R. L. S. a miniature Bible illustrated with rude cuts, picked up at an outdoor stall. "Lloyd's new work" is *Black Canyon.*

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March* 16, 1882]

Dear Mrs. Gosse,—Thank you heartily for the Bible, which is exquisite. I thoroughly appreciate the whole; but have you done justice to the third lion in Daniel (like the third murderer in Macbeth)—a singular animal—study him well. The soldier in the fiery furnace beats me.

I enclose a programme of Lloyd's new work. The work I shall send to-morrow, for the publisher is out and I dare not touch his "plant": *il m'en cuirait.* The work in question I think a huge lark, but still droller is the author's attitude. Not one incident holds with another from beginning to end; and whenever I discover a new inconsistency, Sam is the first to laugh—with a kind of humorous pride at the thing being so silly.

I saw the note, and I was so sorry my article had not come in time for the old lady. We should all hurry up and praise the living. I must praise Tupper. A propos, did you ever read him?—or know any one who had? That is very droll; but the truth is we all live in a clique, buy each other's books and like each other's books; and the great, gaunt, grey, gaping public snaps its big fingers and reads Talmage and Tupper —and *Black Canyon*. My wife is better; I, for the moment, am but so-so myself; but the printer is in very how shall we say?—large type at this present, and the sound of the press never ceases. Remember me to Weg.—Yours very truly,

(signed) Robert Louis Stevenson.

NOTICE

To-day is published by S. L. Osbourne & Co.

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A very remarkable work. Every page produces an effect. The end is as singular as the beginning. I never saw such a work before.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

To Edmund Gosse

Stevenson and Mr. Gosse were still meditating a volume in which some of the famous historical murder cases should be retold (see letter, dated April 16, 1879, to Edmund Gosse). "Gray" and "Keats" are two volumes in Macmillan's series *English Men of Letters.*

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March* 23, 1882]

My dear Weg,—And I had just written the best note to Mrs. Gosse that was in my power. Most blameable.

I now send (for Mrs. Gosse)

BLACK CANYON

Also an advertisement of my new appearance as poet (bard, rather) and hartis on wood. The cut represents the Hero and the Eagle, and is emblematic of Cortez first viewing the Pacific Ocean, which (according to the bard Keats) it took place in Darien. The cut is much admired for the sentiment of discovery, the manly proportions of the voyager, and the fine impression of tropical scenes and the untrodden Waste, so aptly rendered by the hartis.

I would send you the book; but I declare I'm ruined. I got a penny a cut and a halfpenny a set of verses from the flint-hearted publisher, and only one specimen copy, as I'm a sinner. —— was apostolic alongside of Osbourne.

I hope you will be able to decipher this, written at steam speed with a breaking pen, the hot-fast postman at my heels. No excuse, says you. None, sir, says I, and touches my 'at most civil (extraordinary evolution of pen, now quite doomed—to resume—) I have not put pen to the Bloody Murder yet. But it is early on

my list; and when once I get to it, three weeks should see the last bloodstain—maybe a fortnight. For I am beginning to combine an extraordinary laborious slowness while at work, with the most surprisingly quick results in the way of finished manuscripts. How goes Gray? Colvin is to do Keats. My wife is still not well.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

"The enclosed" means a packet of the Davos Press cuts.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, March,* 1882]

My dear Dr. Japp,—You must think me a forgetful rogue, as indeed I am; for I have but now told my publisher to send you a copy of the *Familiar Studies.* However, I own I have delayed this letter till I could send you the enclosed. Remembering the nights at Braemar when we visited the Picture Gallery, I hoped they might amuse you. You see, we do some publishing hereaway. I shall hope to see you in town in May.—Always yours faithfully,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Dr. Alexander Japp

The references in the first paragraph are to the volume *Familiar Studies of Men and Books.*

Chalet am Stein, Davos, April 1, 1882

My dear Dr. Japp,—A good day to date this letter, which is in fact a confession of incapacity. During my wife's illness I somewhat lost my head, and entirely lost a great quire of corrected proofs. This is one of the results; I hope there are none more serious. I was never so sick of any volume as I was of that: I was continually receiving fresh proofs with fresh infinitesi-

mal difficulties. I was ill—I did really fear my wife was worse than ill. Well, it's out now; and though I have observed several carelessnesses myself, and now here's another of your finding—of which, indeed, I ought to be ashamed—it will only justify the sweeping humility of the Preface. Symonds was actually dining with us when your letter came, and I communicated your remarks. . . . He is a far better and more interesting thing than any of his books.

The Elephant was my wife's; so she is proportionately elate you should have picked it out for praise—from a collection, let me add, so replete with the highest qualities of art.

My wicked carcase, as John Knox calls it, holds together wonderfully. In addition to many other things, and a volume of travel, I find I have written, since December, 90 *Cornhill* pages of magazine work—essays and stories: 40,000 words, and I am none the worse—I am the better. I begin to hope I may, if not outlive this wolverine upon my shoulders, at least carry him bravely like Symonds and Alexander Pope. I begin to take a pride in that hope.

I shall be much interested to see your criticisms; you might perhaps send them to me. I believe you know that is not dangerous; one folly I have not—I am not touchy under criticism.

Lloyd and my wife both beg to be remembered; and Lloyd sends as a present a work of his own. I hope you feel flattered; for this is *simply the first time he has ever given one away*. I have to buy my own works, I can tell you.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

From about this time until 1885 Mr. Henley acted in an informal way as agent for R. L. S. in most of his dealings with publishers in London. "Both" in the second paragraph means, I think, *Treasure Island* and *Silverado Squatters*.

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April,* 1882]

My dear Henley,—I hope and hope for a long letter—soon I hope to be superseded by long talks—and it comes not. I remember I have never formally thanked you for that hundred quid, nor in general for the introduction to Chatto and Windus, and continue to bury you in copy as if you were my private secretary. Well, I am not unconscious of it all; but I think least said is often best, generally best; gratitude is a tedious sentiment, it's not ductile, not dramatic.

If Chatto should take both, *cui dedicare?* I am running out of dedikees; if I do, the whole fun of writing is stranded. *Treasure Island*, if it comes out, and I mean it shall, of course goes to Lloyd. Lemme see, I have now dedicated to

W. E. H. [William Ernest Henley].
S. C. [Sidney Colvin].
T. S. [Thomas Stevenson].
Simp. [Sir Walter Simpson].

There remain: C. B., the Williamses—you know they were the parties who stuck up for us about our marriage, and Mrs. W. was my guardian angel, and our Best Man and Bridesmaid rolled in one, and the only third of the wedding party—my sister-in-law, who is booked for *Prince Otto*—Jenkin I suppose sometime—George Meredith, the only man of genius of my acquaintance, and then I believe I'll have to take to the dead, the immortal memory business.

Talking of Meredith, I have just re-read for the third and fourth time *The Egoist*. When I shall have read it the sixth or seventh, I begin to see I shall know about it. You will be astonished when you come to re-read it; I had no idea of the matter—human, red matter he has contrived to plug and pack into that strange and admirable book. Willoughby is, of course, a pure discovery; a complete set of nerves not heretofore examined, and yet running all over the human body—a

suit of nerves. Clara is the best girl ever I saw anywhere. Vernon is almost as good. The manner and the faults of the book greatly justify themselves on further study. Only Dr. Middleton does not hang together; and Ladies Busshe and Culmer *sont des monstruosités*. Vernon's conduct makes a wonderful odd contrast with Daniel Deronda's. I see more and more that Meredith is built for immortality.

Talking of which, Heywood, as a small immortal, an immortalet, claims some attention. *The Woman killed with Kindness* is one of the most striking novels—not plays, though it's more of a play than anything else of his—I ever read. He had such a sweet, sound soul, the old boy. The death of the two pirates in *Fortune by Sea and Land* is a document. He had obviously been present and heard Purser and Clinton take death by the beard with similar braggadocios. Purser and Clinton, names of pirates; Scarlet and Bobbington, names of highwaymen. He had the touch of names, I think. No man I ever knew had such a sense, such a tact, for English nomenclature: Rainsforth, Lacy, Audley, Forrest, Acton, Spencer, Frankford—so his names run.

Byron not only wrote *Don Juan;* he called Joan of Arc "a fanatical strumpet." These are his words. I think the double shame, first to a great poet, second to an English noble, passes words.

Here is a strange gossip.—I am yours loquaciously,

R. L. S.

My lungs are said to be in a splendid state. A cruel examination, an ex*anim*ation I may call it, had this brave result. *Taïaut!* Hillo! Hey! Stand by! Avast! Hurrah!

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The "birthday present" here announced was a copy of the *Cornhill Magazine* for the current month of April, containing the essay *Talk and Talkers.*

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos, April* 9, 1882]

My dear Mother,—Herewith please find belated birthday present. Fanny has another.

Cockshot = Jenkin.	But
Jack = Bob.	pray
Burly = Henley.	regard
Athelred = Simpson.	these
Opalstein = Symonds.	as
Purcel = Gosse.	secrets.

My dear mother, how can I keep up with your breathless changes? Innerleithen, Cramond, Bridge of Allan, Dunblane, Selkirk. I lean to Cramond, but I shall be pleased anywhere, any respite from Davos; never mind, it has been a good, though a dear lesson. Now, with my improved health, if I can pass the summer, I believe I shall be able no more to exceed, no more to draw on you. It is time I sufficed for myself indeed. And I believe I can.

I am still far from satisfied about Fanny; she is certainly better, but it is by fits a good deal, and the symptoms continue, which should not be. I had her persuaded to leave without me this very day (Saturday 8th), but the disclosure of my mismanagement broke up that plan; she would not leave me lest I should mismanage more. I think this an unfair revenge; but I have been so bothered that I cannot struggle. All Davos has been drinking our wine. During the month of March, three litres a day were drunk—O it is too sickening—and that is only a specimen. It is enough to make any one a misanthrope, but the right thing is to hate the donkey that was duped—which I devoutly do.

I have this winter finished *Treasure Island*, written the preface to the *Studies*, a small book about the *Inland Voyage* size, *The Silverado Squatters*, and over and above that upwards of ninety (90) *Cornhill* pages of magazine work. No man can say I have been idle.—Your affectionate son, R. L. Stevenson.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

[*Chalet am Stein, Davos-Platz, April,* 1882]

My dear Bob,—Yours received. I have received a communication by same mail from my mother, clamouring for news, which I must answer as soon as I've done this. Of course, I shall paint your game in lively colours.

I hope to get away from here—let me not speak of it ungratefully—from here—by Thursday at latest. I am indeed much better; but a slip of the foot may still cast me back. I must walk circumspectly yet awhile. But O to be able to out and get wet, and not spit blood next day!

Yes, I remember the *enfantement* of the *Arabian Nights;* the first idea of all was the hansom cabs, which I communicated to you in St. Leonard's Terrace drawing-room. That same afternoon the Prince de Galles and the Suicide Club were invented; and several more now forgotten. I must try to start 'em again.

Lloyd I believe is to be a printer—in the meantime he confines himself to being an expense. He is a first-rate lad for all that. He is now interrupting me about twice to the line, which does not condooce to clarity, I'm afraid.

Fanny is still far from well, quite far from well. My faith is in the Pirate.

I enclose all my artistic works; they are woodcuts—I cut them with a knife out of blocks of wood: I am a wood-engraver; I aaaam a wooooood engraaaaver. Lloyd then prints 'em: are they not fun? I doat on them; in my next venture, I am going to have colour printing; it will be very laborious, six blocks to cut for each picter, but the result would be pyramidal.

If I get through the summer, I settle in Autumn in le pays de France; I believe in the Brittany, and become a *Snoozer.* You will come and snooze a while won't you, and try and get Louisa to join.

Pepys was a decent fellow; singularly like Charles Baxter, by the way, in every character of mind and taste, and not unlike him in face. I did not mean I had been too just to him but not just enough to bigger swells. I would rather have *known* Pepys than the whole jing-bang; I doat on him as a card to know.

We shall be pretty poor at the start, of course, but I guess we can haul through. Only intending visitors to the Britannic Castle must not look for nightingales' tongues. When next you see the form of the jeune et beau pray give him my love, when I come to Weybridge, I'll hope to see him.

Ever your affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson, 1er Roi de Béotie
Pour copie conforme
Le sécrétaire Royale, W. P. Bannatyne.

To Trevor Haddon

The few remaining letters of this period are dated from Edinburgh and from Stobo Manse, near Peebles. This, in the matter of weather and health, was the most disappointing of all Stevenson's attempts at summer residence in Scotland. Before going to Stobo he made a short excursion with his father to Lochearnhead; and later spent some three weeks with me at Kingussie, but from neither place wrote any letters worth preserving. The following was addressed to a young art-student who had read the works of Walt Whitman after reading Stevenson's essay on him, and being staggered by some things he found there had written asking for further comment and counsel.

17 *Heriot Row, Edinburgh* [*June,* 1882]

Dear Sir,—If I have in any way disquieted you, I believe you are justified in bidding me stand and deliver a remedy if there be one: which is the point. 1st I am of your way of thinking: that a good deal of Whitman is as well taken once but 2nd I quite believe that it is better to have everything brought before one in books. In that way the problems reach us when we are cool, and not warped by the sophistries of an instant passion.

Life itself presents its problems with a terrible directness and at the very hour when we are least able to judge calmly. Hence this Pisgah sight of all things, off the top of a book, is only a rational preparation for the ugly grips that must follow.

But 3rd, no man can settle another's life for him. It is the test of the nature and courage of each that he shall decide it for himself. Each in turn must meet and beard the Sphynx. Some things however I may say —and you will treat them as things read in a book for you to accept or refuse as you shall see most fit.

Go not out of your way to make difficulties. Hang back from life while you are young. Shoulder no responsibilities. You do not yet know how far you can trust yourself—it will not be very far, or you are more fortunate than I am. If you can keep your sexual desires in order, be glad, be very glad. Some day, when you meet your fate, you will be free, and the better man. *Don't make a boy and girl friendship that which it is not.* Look at Burns: that is where amourettes conduct an average good man; and a tepid marriage is only a more selfish amourette—in the long run. Whatever you do, see that you don't sacrifice a woman; that's where all imperfect loves conduct us. At the same time, if you can make it convenient to be chaste, for God's sake, avoid the primness of your virtue; hardness to a poor harlot is a sin lower than the ugliest unchastity.

Never be in a hurry anyhow.

There is my sermon.

Certainly, you cannot too earnestly go in for the Greek; and about any art, think last of what pays, first of what pleases. It is in that spirit only that an art can be made. Progress in art is made by learning to *enjoy* it. That which seems a little dull at first, is found to contain the elements of pleasure more largely though more quietly commingled.

I return to my sermon for one more word: Natural desire gives you no right to any particular woman:

that comes with love only, and don't be too ready to believe in love: there are many shams: the true love will not allow you to reason about it.

It is your fault if I appear so pulpiteering.

Wishing you well in life and art, and that you may long be young.—Believe me, yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

[*Edinburgh*] *Sunday* [*June*, 1882]

. . . NOTE turned up, but no grey opuscule, which, however, will probably turn up to-morrow in time to go out with me to Stobo Manse, Peeblesshire, where, if you can make it out, you will be a good soul to pay a visit. I shall write again about the opuscule; and about Stobo, which I have not seen since I was thirteen, though my memory speaks delightfully of it.

I have been very tired and seedy, or I should have written before, *inter alia*, to tell you that I had visited my murder place and found *living traditions* not yet in any printed book; most startling. I also got photographs taken, but the negatives have not yet turned up. I lie on the sofa to write this, whence the pencil: having slept yesterday—1 + 4 + 7½ = 12½ hours and being (9 A.M.) very anxious to sleep again. The arms of Porpus, quoi! A poppy gules, etc.

From Stobo you can conquer Peebles and Selkirk, or to give them their old decent names, Tweeddale and Ettrick. Think of having been called Tweeddale, and being called PEEBLES! Did I ever tell you my skit on my own travel books? We understand that Mr. Stevenson has in the press another volume of unconventional travels: *Personal Adventures in Peeblesshire*. Je la trouve méchante.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

Did I say I had seen a verse on two of the Buccaneers? I did, and *ça-y-est*.

To Trevor Haddon

17 *Heriot Row, Edinburgh* [*June*, 1882]

My dear Sir,—I see nothing "cheekie" in anything you have done. Your letters have naturally given me much pleasure, for it seems to me you are a pretty good young fellow, as young fellows go; and if I add that you remind me of myself, you need not accuse me of retrospective vanity.

You now know an address which will always find me; you might let me have your address in London; I do not promise anything—for I am always overworked in London—but I shall, if I can arrange it, try to see you.

I am afraid I am not so rigid on chastity: you are probably right in your view; but this seems to me a dilemma with two horns, the real curse of a man's life in our state of society—and a woman's too, although, for many reasons, it appears somewhat differently with the enslaved sex. By your "fate" I believe I meant your marriage, or that love at least which may befall any one of us at the shortest notice and overthrow the most settled habits and opinions. I call that your fate, because then, if not before, you can no longer hang back, but must stride out into life and act.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

Mr. Gosse had mistaken the name of the Peeblesshire manse, and is reproached accordingly. "Gray" is Mr. Gosse's volume on that poet in Mr. Morley's series of *English Men of Letters*.

Stobo Manse, Peeblesshire [*July*, 1882]

I would shoot you, but I have no bow;
The place is not called Stobs, but Stobo.
As Gallic Kids complain of "Bobo,"
I mourn for your mistake of Stobo.

First, we shall be gone in September. But if you think of coming in August, my mother will hunt for you with pleasure. We should all be overjoyed—though Stobo it could not be, as it is but a kirk and manse, but possibly somewhere within reach. Let us know.

Second, I have read your *Gray* with care. A more difficult subject I can scarce fancy: it is crushing; yet I think you have managed to shadow forth a man, and a good man too; and honestly, I doubt if I could have done the same. This may seem egoistic; but you are not such a fool as to think so. It is the natural expression of real praise. The book as a whole is readable; your subject peeps every here and there out of the crannies like a shy violet—he could do no more —and his aroma hangs there.

I write to catch a minion of the post. Hence brevity. Answer about the house.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

In the heat of conversation Stevenson was accustomed to invent any number of fictitious personages, generally Scottish, and to give them names and to set them playing their imaginary parts in life, reputable or otherwise. Many of these inventions, of whom Mr. Pirbright Smith and Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne were two, assumed for himself and his friends a kind of substantial existence; and constantly in talk, and occasionally in writing, he would keep up the play of reporting their sayings and doings quite gravely, as in the following.

[*Stobo Manse, July,* 1882]

Dear Henley, . . . I am not worth an old damn. I am also crushed by bad news of Symonds; his good lung going; I cannot help reading it as a personal hint; God help us all! Really I am not very fit for work; but I try, try, and nothing comes of it.

I believe we shall have to leave this place; it is low, damp, and *mauchy;* the rain it raineth every day; and the glass goes *tol-de-rol-de-riddle.*

Yet it's a bonny bit; I wish I could live in it, but

doubt. I wish I was well away somewhere else. I feel like flight some days; honour bright.

Pirbright Smith is well. Old Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne is here staying at a country inn. His whole baggage is a pair of socks and a book in a fishing-basket; and he borrows even a rod from the landlord. He walked here over the hills from Sanquhar, "singin'," he says, "like a mavis." I naturally asked him about Hazlitt. "He wouldnae take his drink," he said, "a queer, queer fellow." But did not seem further communicative. He says he has become "releegious," but still swears like a trooper. I asked him if he had no headquarters. "No likely," said he. He says he is writing his memoirs, which will be interesting. He once met Borrow: they boxed; "and Geordie," says the old man chuckling, "gave me the damnedest hiding." Of Wordsworth he remarked, "He wasnae sound in the faith, sir, and a milk-blooded, blue-spectacled bitch forbye. But his po'mes are grand—there's no denying that." I asked him what his book was. "I havenae mind," said he—that was his only book! On turning it out, I found it was one of my own, and on showing it to him, he remembered it at once. "O aye," he said, "I mind now. It's pretty bad: ye'll have to do better than that, chieldy," and chuckled, chuckled. He is a strange old figure, to be sure. He cannot endure Pirbright Smith —"a mere æsthatic," he said. "Pooh!" "Fishin' and releegion—these are my aysthatics," he wound up.

I thought this would interest you, so scribbled it down. I still hope to get more out of him about Hazlitt, though he utterly pooh-poohed the idea of writing H.'s life. "Ma life now," he said, "there's been queer things in *it*." He is seventy-nine! but may well last to a hundred!—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

VII

THE RIVIERA AGAIN—MARSEILLES AND HYÈRES

October, 1882—August, 1884

VII

THE RIVIERA AGAIN—

MARSEILLES AND HYÈRES

IN the two years and odd months since his return from California, Stevenson had made no solid gain of health. His winters, and especially his second winter, at Davos had seemed to do him much temporary good; but during the summers in Scotland he had lost as much as he had gained, or more. Loving Provence and the Mediterranean shore from of old, he now made up his mind to try them once again.

As the ways and restrictions of a settled invalid were repugnant to Stevenson's character and instincts, so were the life and society of a regular invalid station depressing and uncongenial to him. He determined accordingly to avoid settling in one of these, and hoped to find a suitable climate and habitation that should be near, though not in, some centre of the active and ordinary life of man, with accessible markets, libraries, and other resources. In September, 1882, he started with his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson in search of a new home, and thought first of Western Provence, a region new to him. Arriving at Montpellier, he was laid up again with a bad bout of his chest troubles, and the doctor not recommending him to stay, returned to Marseilles. Here he was rejoined by his wife, and after a few days' exploration in the neighbourhood they lighted on what seemed exactly the home they wanted. This was a roomy and attractive enough house and garden called the Campagne Defli, near the manufacturing suburb of St. Marcel, in a sheltered position in full view of the shapely coastward hills. By the third

week in October they were installed, and in eager hopes of pleasant days to come and a return to working health. These hopes were not realised. Week after week went on, and the hemorrhages and fits of fever and exhaustion did not diminish. Work, except occasional verses, and a part of the story called *The Treasure of Franchard,* would not flow, and the time had to be whiled away with games of patience and other resources of the sick man. Nearly two months were thus passed; during the whole of one of them Stevenson had not been able to go beyond the garden; and by Christmas he had to face the fact that the air of the place was tainted. An epidemic of fever, due to some defect of drainage, broke out, and it became clear that this could be no home for Stevenson. Accordingly, at his wife's instance, though having scarce the strength to travel, he left suddenly for Nice, she staying behind to pack their chattels and wind up their affairs and responsibilities as well as might be. Various misadventures, miscarriages of telegrams, journeys taken at cross purposes and the like, making existence uncomfortably dramatic at the moment, caused the couple to believe for a while that they had fairly lost each other. Mrs. Stevenson allows me to print a letter from herself to Mr. J. A. Symonds vividly relating these predicaments (see p. 105 foll.). At last, in the course of January, they came safely together at Marseilles, and next made a few weeks' stay at Nice, where Stevenson's health quickly mended. Thence they returned as far as Hyères. Staying here through the greater part of February, at the Hôtel des Îles d'Or, and finding the place to their liking, they cast about once more for a resting-place, and were this time successful.

The house chosen by the Stevensons at Hyères was not near the sea, but inland, on the road above the old town and beneath the ruins of the castle. The Châlet La Solitude it was called; a cramped but habitable cottage built in the Swiss manner, with a pleasant strip of garden, and a view and situation hardly to be

bettered. Here the family lived for the next sixteen months (March, 1883, to July, 1884). To the first part of this period Stevenson often afterwards referred as the happiest time of his life. His lung trouble abated for the time being enough to afford, at least to his own buoyant spirit, a strong hope of ultimate recovery. He delighted in his surroundings, and realised for the first time the joys of a true home of his own. The last shadow of a cloud between himself and his parents had passed away; and towards his father, now in declining health, and often suffering from moods of constitutional depression, the son begins on his part to assume, how touchingly and tenderly will be seen from the following letters, a quasi-paternal attitude of encouragement and monition. At the same time his work on the completion of the *Silverado Squatters*, on *Prince Otto*, the *Child's Garden of Verses* (for which his own name was *Penny Whistles*), on the *Black Arrow* (designated hereinafter, on account of its Old English dialect, as "tushery"), and other undertakings prospered well. In the autumn the publication of *Treasure Island* in book form brought with it the first breath of popular applause. The reader will see how modest a price Stevenson was content, nay, delighted, to receive for this classic. It was two or three years yet before he could earn enough to support himself and his family by literature, a thing he had always been earnestly bent on doing, regarding it as the only justification for his chosen way of life. In the meantime, it must be understood, whatever help he needed from his father was from the hour of his marriage always amply and ungrudgingly given.

In September of the same year, 1883, Stevenson had felt deeply the death of his old friend James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* and the references in the following letters). But still his health held out fairly, until, in January, 1884, on a visit to Nice, he was unexpectedly prostrated anew by an attack which brought him to death's door. Returning to his home,

his recovery had been only partial when, after four months (May, 1884), a recurrence of violent hemorrhages from the lung once more prostrated him completely; soon after which he quitted Hyères, and the epidemic of cholera which broke out there the same summer prevented all thoughts of his return.

The Hyères time, both during the happy and hard-working months of March-December, 1883, and the semi-convalescence of February-May, 1884, was a prolific one in the way of correspondence; and there is perhaps no period of his life when his letters reflect so fully the variety of his moods and the eagerness of his occupations.

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

Montpellier, Oct. 1882

My dear,—The Doctoribus just left me and promises me better. He allows me to go out. He assures me there is nothing wrong in my lungs: "statu quo complete," he swears, only catarrh. He says if I could have a pinch of gout, I should probably find my lungs leave me in peace. Does not know however which I should prefer. The blood has almost stopped: it is very faint now.

If my mother is not to come with you to Paris, I don't know that I want you to come at all. I cannot bear to have you travelling alone. My mother might come to Paris with you. Tell my mother she has to come to Paris with you, no excuse will serve.

If she brings you to Paris, you must come (first, second is no good on this line)

to Hotel du Jaura,
Dijon. 1st night.
Hotel de l'Univers,
Lyons. 2nd night.

And there I would have a word telling you where to come and meet me on the morrow.

That is not very appalling, is it?

And you can then come and produce a tonic effect on your papa, who is open to tonic effects of that description. If you think I don't want to see you, you are a great baby; kiss my Wogg; I like him to be bad.

I am going to wear beautiful rich clothing always now *on condition that you* do. When you come you shall have a kiss.

Ever your loving husband
Louis.

I am no good at all. Marriage does soften a person. I have neither pluck nor patience, and I must own I

have wearied awful for you. But you will never understand that bit of my character. I don't want you when I am ill. At least it's only one half of me that wants you, and I don't like to think of your coming back and not finding me better than when we parted. That is why I would rather be miserable than send for you.

To the Editor of the New York "Tribune"

At Marseilles, while waiting to occupy the house which he had leased in the suburbs of that city, Stevenson learned that his old friend and kind adviser, Mr. James Payn, with whom he had been intimate as sub-editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* under Mr. Leslie Stephen in the '70's, had been inadvertently represented in the columns of the New York *Tribune* as a plagiarist of R. L. S. In order to put matters right, he at once sent the following letter both to the *Tribune* and to the London *Athenæum*;—

Terminus Hotel, Marseilles, October 16, 1882

Sir,—It has come to my ears that you have lent the authority of your columns to an error.

More than half in pleasantry—and I now think the pleasantry ill-judged—I complained in a note to my *New Arabian Nights* that some one, who shall remain nameless for me, had borrowed the idea of a story from one of mine. As if I had not borrowed the ideas of the half of my own! As if any one who had written a story ill had a right to complain of any other who should have written it better! I am indeed thoroughly ashamed of the note, and of the principle which it implies.

But it is no mere abstract penitence which leads me to beg a corner of your paper—it is the desire to defend the honour of a man of letters equally known in America and England, of a man who could afford to lend to me and yet be none the poorer; and who, if he would so far condescend, has my free permission to borrow from me all that he can find worth borrowing.

Indeed, sir, I am doubly surprised at your corre-

spondent's error. That James Payn should have borrowed from me is already a strange conception. The author of *Lost Sir Massingberd* and *By Proxy* may be trusted to invent his own stories. The author of *A Grape from a Thorn* knows enough, in his own right, of the humorous and pathetic sides of human nature.

But what is far more monstrous—what argues total ignorance of the man in question—is the idea that James Payn could ever have transgressed the limits of professional propriety. I may tell his thousands of readers on your side of the Atlantic that there breathes no man of letters more inspired by kindness and generosity to his brethren of the profession, and, to put an end to any possibility of error, I may be allowed to add that I often have recourse, and that I had recourse once more but a few weeks ago, to the valuable practical help which he makes it his pleasure to extend to younger men.

I send a duplicate of this letter to a London weekly; for the mistake, first set forth in your columns, has already reached England, and my wanderings have made me perhaps last of the persons interested to hear a word of it.—I am, etc.,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

Montpellier, Oct., 1882

I AM a very low horrid fellow. I don't ask you to forgive me, for I am not worth forgiving. I have some more hemorrhage; and Caisso (I suppose quite rightly) won't let me go. He says there is nothing fresh in the lungs; only some little cold, which I seem to have taken steadily. I am now pretty dull as you can fancy. "*La silence et le repos*," said Dr. Caisso.

Silence et repos
Dit M. Caisso.
Je dors sur mon dos
Triste comme un pot.

That is the best fun I can get out of it all in the meantime. Also that when I went to see him yesterday, I passed a very pleasant afternoon in his waiting-room among the curious meridional peasants, who quarrelled and told their diseases. I made myself very popular there, I don't know how.

I do not ask you to love me any more. I am too much trouble. Besides, I thought myself all over last night; and, my dear, such rubbage. You cannot put up with such a man.

In one way I see you act on these principles for I hear from you very rarely. Indeed, I suspect you of being very ill. If you are I shall forgive you, my dear, you are provoked to it, I know. If you are not, you might write oftener, I think, to one who is devoted to silence and repose.

Caisso has been here; he will return again this evening; he still thinks he will perhaps let me start tomorrow. Whether I shall gain much by starting, I don't know. But at least I'll get away from here. I don't feel the least unhappy, but I don't feel the least happy either. A person who has been a good while married—(to an angel)—chafes at this position. Besides which, it is so dull.

I enclose a thing which should make you laugh.

Caisso tells me he has been besieged by people spitting blood; five to-day alone. I wish I could hear from you.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Terminus Hotel, Marseille,
Saturday [*October,* 1882]

My dear Bob,—We have found a house!—at Saint Marcel, Banlieue de Marseille. In a lovely valley between hills part wooded, part white cliffs; a house of a dining-room, of a fine salon—one side lined with a long divan—three good bedrooms (two of them with dressing-rooms), three small rooms (chambers of *bonne*

and sich), a large kitchen, a lumber room, many cupboards, a back court, a large, large olive yard, cultivated by a resident *paysan*, a well, a berceau, a good deal of rockery, a little pine shrubbery, a railway station in front, two lines of omnibus to Marseille.

£48 per annum.

It is called Campagne Defli! query Campagne Debug? The Campagne Demosquito goes on here nightly, and is very deadly. Ere we can get installed, we shall be beggared to the door, I see.

I vote for separations; F.'s arrival here, after our separation, was better fun to me than being married was by far. A separation completed is most valuable property; worth piles.—Ever your affectionate cousin,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Terminus Hotel, Marseille, le 17th October, 1882

My dear Father,—We grow, every time we see it, more delighted with our house. It is five miles out of Marseilles, in a lovely spot, among lovely wooded and cliffy hills—most mountainous in line—far lovelier, to my eyes, than any Alps. To-day we have been out inventorying; and though a mistral blew, it was delightful in an open cab, and our house with the windows open was heavenly, soft, dry, sunny southern. I fear there are fleas—it is called Campagne Defli—and I look forward to tons of insecticide being employed.

I have had to write a letter to the New York *Tribune* and the *Athenæum*. Payn was accused of stealing my stories! I think I have put things handsomely for him.

Just got a servant ! ! !—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson

Our servant is a Muckle Hash of a Weedy!

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Campagne Defli, Saturday, 11th Nov., 1882

My dear Mother,—I do think I am better. I have had at last a night without a sweat; and besides I feel decidedly less prostrate. I still, as all through this attack, eat and digest well.

You were disappointed that I did not write about your illness. Fanny wrote that very night; we thought you would come for sure, and hurried up preparing things. Baxter and Henley may have thought my letters cheery. They were both business letters; and I have scarce written a letter (four in all) for the last ten days; indeed I was not fit.

À propos of letters, pray do not open my correspondence so recklessly—or at least, not read it. All my correspondents may not be pleased.

Also, pray, send us the allowance; we are afraid of the boxes coming. The last (Fanny's boxes) cost us £7 odd, which depressed us on the box business. We have a new stove in to-day in the kitchen——£4——which is to do wonders if it don't explode.

I am unfit to do any work whatever, which always depresses me to the ground. But I keep better spirits than usual. I have my home and my garden, and my hills and my table wine, and my wife—and my dog.

Your affectionate son,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

The next two months' letters had perforce to consist of little save bulletins of back-going health, and consequent disappointment and incapacity for work.

Campagne Defli, St. Marcel,
Banlieue de Marseille, November 13, 1882

My dear Mother,—Your delightful letters duly arrived this morning. They were the only good feature

of the day, which was not a success. Fanny was in bed—she begged I would not split upon her, she felt so guilty; but as I believe she is better this evening, and has a good chance to be right again in a day or two, I will disregard her orders. I do not go back, but do not go forward—or not much. It is, in one way, miserable—for I can do no work; a very little wood-cutting, the newspapers, and a note about every two days to write, completely exhausts my surplus energy; even Patience I have to cultivate with parsimony. I see, if I could only get to work, that we could live here with comfort, almost with luxury. Even as it is, we should be able to get through a considerable time of idleness. I like the place immensely, though I have seen so little of it—I have only been once outside the gate since I was here! It puts me in mind of a summer at Prestonpans and a sickly child you once told me of.

Thirty-two years now finished! My twenty-ninth was in San Francisco, I remember—rather a bleak birthday. The twenty-eighth was not much better; but the rest have been usually pleasant days in pleasant circumstances.

Love to you and to my father and to Cummy.

From me and Fanny and Wogg.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

San Marcel, Dec. 23rd, 1882

My dear Mother,—Fanny is away into town to meet Sam, who arrives at five o'clock to-morrow. I am dreadfully lonely, I must own, but I must try to write a note, for I don't believe Fanny has written much lately. She is, I think, both out of health and spirits. I will enclose two reviews. *Deacon Brodie* was, I suppose, hissed off the boards yesterday evening at Bradford. But I have not yet heard whether bones were broken.—I keep going up, and then a little down,

but on the whole *very slowly* up. I had to give up wood-engraving, chess, latterly even patience, and could read almost nothing but newspapers. It was dull but necessary. I wonder why my father never answered my answer to his. I seem hopelessly hidebound as you see; nothing comes out of me but chips. I give it up. With love and all good wishes for the season, for this should reach you on Xmas, I think, believe me ever

Your loving son,

R. L. S.

To Trevor Haddon

Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, Dec. 29th, 1882

Dear Sir,—I am glad you sent me your note, I had indeed lost your address, and was half thinking to try the Ringstown one; but far from being busy, I have been steadily ill. I was but three or four days in London, waiting till one of my friends was able to accompany me, and had neither time nor health to see anybody but some publisher people. Since then I have been worse and better, better and worse, but never able to do any work and for a large part of the time forbidden to write and even to play patience, the last of civilised amusements. In brief, I have been "the sheer hulk" to a degree almost outside of my experience, and I desire all my friends to forgive me my sins of omission this while back. I only wish you were the only one to whom I owe a letter, or many letters.

But you see, at least, you had done nothing to offend me; and I dare say you will let me have a note from time to time, until we shall have another chance to meet.—Yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

An excellent new year to you, and many of them. If you chance to see a paragraph in the papers de-

scribing my illness, and the "delicacies suitable to my invalid condition" cooked in copper, and the other ridiculous and revolting yarns, pray regard it as a spectral illusion, and pass by.

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

I intercalate here Mrs. Stevenson's extremely vivid and characteristic account of the weird misadventures that befell the pair during their retreat from St. Marcel in search of a healthier home. Basil Hammond, mentioned towards the end of the letter, was for many years fellow of, and historical lecturer at, Trinity College, Cambridge.

[*Campagne Defli, St. Marcel, January,* 1883]

MY DEAR MR. SYMONDS.—What must you think of us? I hardly dare write to you. What do you do when people to whom you have been the dearest of friends requite you by acting like fiends? I do hope you heap coals of fire on their heads in the good old Christian sense.

Louis has been very ill again. I hasten to say that he is now better. But I thought at one time he would never be better again. He had continual hemorrhages and became so weak that he was twice insensible on one day, and was for a long time like one dead. At the worst fever broke out in this village, typhus, I think, and all day the death-bells rang, and we could hear the chanting whilst the wretched villagers carried about the dead lying bare to the sun on their coffin-lids, so spreading the contagion through the streets. The evening of the day when Louis was so long insensible the weather changed, becoming very clear and fine and greatly refreshing and reviving him. Then I said if it held good he should start in the morning for Nice and try what a change might do. Just at that time there was not money enough for the two of us, so he had to start alone, though I expected soon to be

able to follow him. During the night a peasant-man died in a house in our garden, and in the morning the corpse, hideously swollen in the stomach, was lying on its coffin-lid at our gates. Fortunately it was taken away just before Louis went, and he didn't see it nor hear anything about it until afterwards. I had been back and forth all the morning from the door to the gates, and from the gates to the door, in an agony lest Louis should have to pass it on his way out.

I was to have a despatch from Toulon where Louis was to pass the night, two hours from St. Marcel, and another from Nice, some few hours farther, the next day. I waited one, two, three, four days, and no word came. Neither telegram nor letter. The evening of the fourth day I went to Marseilles and telegraphed to the Toulon and Nice stations and to the bureau of police. I had been pouring out letters to every place I could think of. The people at Marseilles were very kind and advised me to take no further steps to find my husband. He was certainly dead, they said. It was plain that he stopped at some little station on the road, speechless and dying, and it was now too late to do anything; I had much better return at once to my friends. "Eet ofen 'appens so," said the Secretary, and "Oh yes, all right, very well," added a Swiss in a sympathetic voice. I waited all night at Marseilles and got no answer, all the next day and got no answer; then I went back to St. Marcel and there was nothing there. At eight I started on the train with Lloyd who had come for his holidays, but it only took us to Toulon where again I telegraphed. At last I got an answer the next day at noon. I waited at Toulon for the train I had reason to believe Louis travelled by, intending to stop at every station and inquire for him until I got to Nice. Imagine what those days were to me. I never received any of the letters Louis had written to me, and he was reading the first he had received from me when I knocked at his door. A week afterwards I had an answer from the police. Louis was

much better: the change and the doctor, who seems very clever, have done wonderful things for him. It was during this first day of waiting that I received your letter. There was a vague comfort in it like a hand offered in the darkness, but I did not read it until long after.

We have had many other wild misadventures, Louis has twice started actually from Nice under a misapprehension. At this moment I believe him to be at Marseilles, stopping at the Hotel du Petit Louvre: I am supposed to be packing here at St. Marcel, afterwards we are to go somewhere, perhaps to the Lake of Geneva. My nerves are so shattered by the terrible suspense I endured that memorable week that I have not been fit to do much. When I was returning from Nice a dreadful old man with a fat wife and a weak granddaughter sat opposite me and plied me with the most extraordinary questions. He began by asking if Lloyd was any connection of mine, and ended I believe by asking my mother's maiden name. Another of the questions he put to me was where Louis wished to be buried, and whether I could afford to have him embalmed when he died. When the train stopped the only other passenger, a quiet man in a corner who looked several times as if he wished to interfere and stop the old man but was too shy, came to me and said that he knew Sidney Colvin and he knew you, and that you were both friends of Louis; and that his name was Basil Hammond, and he wished to stay on a day in Marseilles and help me work off my affairs. I accepted his offer with heartfelt thanks. I was extremely ill next day, but we two went about and arranged about giving up this house and what compensation, and did some things that I could not have managed alone. My French is useful only in domestic economy, and even that, I fear, is very curious and much of it patois. Wasn't that a good fellow, and a kind fellow?—I cannot tell you how grateful I am, words are such feeble things—at least for that purpose. For anger,

justifiable wrath, they are all too forcible. It was very bad of me not to write to you, we talked of you so often and thought of you so much, and I always said—"now I will write"—and then somehow I could not. . .

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Nice, Jan. 5, 1883

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Please continue to address me at St. Marcel so that Fanny may have a sight of the letters; but here I am at Nice—Grand Hotel—a little farther up the river than the old Chauvain—now Cosmopolitan. What a change for twenty years ago! The very river is now bridged over, and gardens and casinos and the like occupy its place. The old Chauvain, I looked into; gone was the gardened court, gone, of course, all the travelling carriages I used to play among with the little Italian girl and the little German boy. Only the Place Masséna still has its arcades and the identical café still remains where I remember seeing my father and Mr. Abbot sitting in the moonlight, Abbot eating ices; and there is still the bastioned fort on the hill top over the old Menton road, that I adored beyond anything in stone and lime I ever saw. Twenty years: dear me, I am an old man for all the good I've done. I think the change has done me a great deal of good, however. This huge caravanserai is fearfully dear, but I am still too weary to look for anything else; I stay mostly in bed, eat and drink of the best I can find, and banish care with all my might.

I am sorry my letter to my father went astray; it was engineering in part, and so, let us hope, not valuable.

My best wishes to you both and my best love. Auld lang syne is very close to me here.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

After his Christmas flight to Marseilles, and thence to Nice, Stevenson began to mend quickly. In this letter to Mr. Baxter he acknowledged the receipt of a specimen proof, set up for their private amusement, of *Brashiana*, the series of burlesque sonnets he had written at Davos in memory of the Edinburgh publican already mentioned. It should be explained that in their correspondence Stevenson and Mr. Baxter were accustomed to keep up an old play of their student days by merging their identities in those of two fictitious personages, Thomson and Johnson, imaginary types of Edinburgh character and exelders of the Scottish Kirk.

Grand Hotel, Nice, 12th January, '83

Dear Charles,—Thanks for your good letter. It is true, man, God's trüth, what ye say about the body Stevison. The deil himsel, it's my belief, couldnae get the soul harled oot o' the creature's wame, or he had seen the hinder end o' they proofs. Ye crack o' Mæcenas, he's nacbody by you! He gied the lad Horace a rax forrit by all accounts; but he never gied him proofs like yon. Horace may hae been a better hand at the clink than Stevison—mind, I'm no sayin' 't—but onyway he was never sae weel prentit. Damned, but it's bonny! Hoo mony pages will there be, think ye? Stevison maun hae sent ye the feck o' twenty sangs—fifteen I'se warrant. Weel, that'll can make thretty pages, gin ye were to prent on ae side only, whilk wad be perhaps wat a man o' your *great* ideas would be ettlin' at, man Johnson. Then there wad be the Pre-face, an' prose ye ken prents oot langer than po'try at the hinder end, for ye hae to say things in't. An' then there'll be a title-page and a dedication and an index wi' the first lines like, and the deil an' a'. Man, it'll be grand. Nae copies to be given to the Liberys.

I am alane myself, in Nice, they ca't, but damned, I think they micht as well ca't Nesty. The Pile-on,* 's they ca't, 's aboot as big as the river Tay at Perth: and it's rainin' maist like Greenock. Dod, I've seen 's

* *Paillon.*

had mair o' what they ca' the I-talian at Muttonhole. I-talian! I haenae seen the sun for eicht and forty hours. Thomason's better, I believe. But the body's fair attenyated. He's doon to seeven stane eleeven, an' he sooks awa' at cod liver ile, till it's a fair disgrace. Ye see he tak's it on a drap brandy; and it's my belief, it's just an excuse for a dram. He an' Stevison gang aboot their lane, maistly; they're company to either, like, an' whiles they'll speak o' Johnson. But *he's* far awa', losh me! Stevison's last book's in a third edection; an' it's bein' translated (like the psaulms o' David, nae less) into French; and an eediot they ca' Asher—a kind o' rival of Tauchnitz—is bringin' him oot in a paper book for the Frenchies and the German folk in twa volumes. Sae he's in luck, ye see.—Yours,

THOMSON.

To Thomas Stevenson

No date, and presumably from San Marcel or Hyères, in reference to a letter sent originally to Thomas Stevenson and forwarded by him to R. L. S. for translation.

ALL well, dear colleague. Cold as Siberia; I believe colder; but then I never was there. R. L. S.

Translation of enclosed, very literal, for the fun's sake.

"I have made acquaintance of the *treatise of Marine Works* which you have published in 1874, and of which you have offered a copy to my conductor at St. Jean de Luz, Mr. Milloy. Your work, so conscientious and so crammed with facts and observations of the most high importance, has interested me in the most lively manner; and I believe it would be to render a veritable service to the French Engineers, to publish a translation thereof in our tongue. I come then to ask you, Mr., if you consent that this translation be made by me. I should be very grateful to you—in case you kindly authorise me to undertake the work—if you

would tell me whether this permission has been already asked by any one else. In fine, Mister, in case you should choose me as translator, I should ask you to refuse the permission to any one else for the space of one year, dating from an epoch which we can fix in the future. That will be for me a precious guarantee against trouble which I might have given myself unusefully.

I hope, Mister, that this letter will become for me the point of departure of an exchange of observations and ideas, to which your great experience in sea works makes me attach the most great price. And—if it is true that similarity of tastes and a common desire to do well form a solid basis for friendship, I do not despair, Mister, to gain some day a share of yours.

Kindly accept, Mister and dear colleague, the expression of my sentiments of perfect esteem.

FRED ANDRÉ.

Address:

Monsieur Frederic André,
Ingénieur des travaux maritimes
à Bayonne, Basses Pyrenées, France."

This is very jolly, isn't it? Bravo! Here's to your health, sir, in a draught. Kindly accept, Mister and dear Colleague, the expression of my sentiments of ecstatic congratulation.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

Stevenson here narrates in his own fashion by what generalship he at last got rid of the Campagne Defli without having to pay compensation as his wife expected.

Hotel du Petit Louvre, Marseille, 15 *Feb.*, 1883

DEAR SIR,—This is to intimate to you that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson were yesterday safely delivered

of a
Campagne.

The parents are both doing much better than could be expected; particularly the dear papa.

There, Colvin, I did it this time. Huge success. The propriétaires were scattered like chaff. If it had not been the agent, may Israel now say, if it had not been the agent who was on our side! But I made the agent march! I threatened law; I was Immense—what do I say?—Immeasurable. The agent, however, behaved well and is a fairly honest little one-eared, white-eyed tom-cat of an opera-going gold-hunter. The propriétaire *non est inventa;* we countermarched her, got invaluators; and in place of a hundred francs in her pocket, she got nothing, and I paid *one* silver biscuit! It *might* go further but I am convinced will not, and anyway, I fear not the consequences.

The weather is incredible; my heart sings; my health satisfies even my wife. I did jolly well right to come after all and she now admits it. For she broke down as I knew she would, and I from here, without passing a night at the Defli, though with a cruel effusion of coach-hires, took up the wondrous tale and steered the ship through. I now sit crowned with laurel and literally exulting in kudos. The affair has been better managed than our last two winterings.—I am yours,

Brabazon Drum.

To Alison Cunningham

The verses referred to in the following are those of the *Child's Garden.*

[*Nice, February,* 1883]

My dear Cummy,—You must think, and quite justly, that I am one of the meanest rogues in creation. But though I do not write (which is a thing I hate), it by no means follows that people are out of my mind. It is natural that I should always think more or less about you, and still more natural that I should think of you when I went back to Nice. But the real rea-

son why you have been more in my mind than usual is because of some little verses that I have been writing, and that I mean to make a book of; and the real reason of this letter (although I ought to have written to you anyway) is that I have just seen that the book in question must be dedicated to

ALISON CUNNINGHAM,

the only person who will really understand it. I don't know when it may be ready, for it has to be illustrated, but I hope in the meantime you may like the idea of what is to be; and when the time comes, I shall try to make the dedication as pretty as I can make it. Of course, this is only a flourish, like taking off one's hat; but still, a person who has taken the trouble to write things does not dedicate them to any one without meaning it; and you must just try to take this dedication in place of a great many things that I might have said, and that I ought to have done, to prove that I am not altogether unconscious of the great debt of gratitude I owe you. This little book, which is all about my childhood, should indeed go to no other person but you, who did so much to make that childhood happy.

Do you know, we came very near sending for you this winter. If we had not had news that you were ill too, I almost believe we should have done so, we were so much in trouble.

I am now very well; but my wife has had a very very bad spell, through overwork and anxiety, when I was *lost!* I suppose you heard of that. She sends you her love, and hopes you will write to her, though she no more than I deserves it. She would add a word herself, but she is too played out. I am, ever your old boy,

R. L. S.

To W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson was by this time beginning to send home some of the MS. of the *Child's Garden*, the title of which had not yet

been settled. The pieces as first numbered are in a different order from that afterwards adopted, but the reader will easily identify the references. No illustrated edition was as a matter of fact produced until 1896.

[*Nice, March,* 1883]

My dear Lad,—This is to announce to you the MS. of Nursery Verses, now numbering xlviii pieces or 599 verses, which, of course, one might augment *ad infinitum.*

But here is my notion to make all clear.

I do not want a big ugly quarto; my soul sickens at the look of a quarto. I want a refined octavo, not large—not *larger* than the *Donkey Book*, at any price.

I think the full page might hold four verses of four lines, that is to say, counting their blanks at two, of twenty-two lines in height. The first page of each number would only hold two verses or ten lines, the title being low down. At this rate, we should have seventy-eight or eighty pages of letterpress.

The designs should not be in the text, but facing the poem; so that if the artist liked, he might give two pages of design to every poem that turned the leaf, *i.e.* longer than eight lines, *i.e.* to twenty-eight out of the forty-six. I should say he would not use this privilege (?) above five times, and some he might scorn to illustrate at all, so we may say fifty drawings. I shall come to the drawings next.

But now you see my book of the thickness, since the drawings count two pages, of 180 pages; and since the paper will perhaps be thicker, of near two hundred by bulk. It is bound in a quiet green with the words in thin gilt. Its shape is a slender tall octavo. And it sells for the publisher's fancy, and it will be a darling to look at; in short, it would be like one of the original Heine books in type and spacing.

Now for the pictures. I take another sheet and begin to jot notes for them when my imagination serves: I will run through the book, writing when I have an idea. There, I have jotted enough to give the artist

a notion. Of course, I don't do more than contribute ideas, but I will be happy to help in any and every way. I may as well add another idea; when the artist finds nothing much to illustrate, a good drawing of any *object* mentioned in the text, were it only a loaf of bread or a candlestick, is a most delightful thing to a young child. I remember this keenly.

Of course, if the artist insists on a larger form, I must, I suppose, bow my head. But my idea I am convinced is the best, and would make the book truly, not fashionably pretty.

I forgot to mention that I shall have a dedication; I am going to dedicate 'em to Cummy; it will please her, and lighten a little my burthen of ingratitude. A low affair is the Nurse business.

I will add no more to this lest you should want to communicate with the artist; try another sheet. I wonder how many I'll keep wandering to.

O I forgot. As for the title, I think "Nursery Verses" the best. Poetry is not the strong point of the text, and I shrink from any title that might seem to claim that quality; otherwise we might have "Nursery Muses" or "New Songs of Innocence" (but that were a blasphemy), or "Rimes of Innocence": the last not bad, or—an idea—"The Jews' Harp," or—now I have it—"The Penny Whistle."

THE PENNY WHISTLE:

NURSERY VERSES

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY —— —— ——

And here we have an excellent frontispiece, of a party playing on a P. W. to a little ring of dancing children.

THE PENNY WHISTLE

is the name for me.

Fool! this is all wrong, here is the true name:—

PENNY WHISTLES

FOR SMALL WHISTLERS.

The second title is queried, it is perhaps better, as simply PENNY WHISTLES.

Nor you, O Penny Whistler, grudge
That I your instrument debase:
By worse performers still we judge,
And give that fife a second place!

Crossed penny whistles on the cover, or else a sheaf of 'em.

SUGGESTIONS

IV. The procession—the child running behind it. The procession tailing off through the gates of a cloudy city.

IX. *Foreign Lands.*—This will, I think, want two plates—the child climbing, his first glimpse over the garden wall, with what he sees—the trees shooting higher and higher like the beanstalk, and the view widening. The river slipping in. The road arriving in Fairyland.

X. *Windy Nights.*—The child in bed listening—the horseman galloping.

XII. The child helplessly watching his ship—then he gets smaller, and the doll joyfully comes alive—the pair landing on the island—the ship's deck with the doll steering and the child firing the penny cannon. Query two plates? The doll should never come properly alive.

XV. Building of the ship—storing her—Navigation—Tom's accident, the other child paying no attention.

XXXI. *The Wind.*—I sent you my notion of already.

XXXVI. *Foreign Children.*—The foreign types dancing in a jing-a-ring, with the English child pushing in the middle. The foreign children looking at and showing each other marvels. The English child at

the leeside of a roast of beef. The English child sitting thinking with his picture-books all round him, and the jing-a-ring of the foreign children in miniature dancing over the picture-books.

XXXIX. Dear artist, can you do me that?

XLII. The child being started off—the bed sailing, curtains and all, upon the sea—the child waking and finding himself at home; the corner of toilette might be worked in to look like the pier.

XLVII. The lighted part of the room, to be carefully distinguished from my child's dark hunting grounds. A shaded lamp. R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hotel des Iles d'Or, Hyères, Var,
March 2 [1883]

My dear Mother,—It must be at least a fortnight since we have had a scratch of a pen from you; and if it had not been for Cummy's letter, I should have feared you were worse again: as it is, I hope we shall hear from you to-day or to-morrow at latest.

Health.—Our news is good: Fanny never got so bad as we feared, and we hope now that this attack may pass off in threatenings. I am greatly better, have gained flesh, strength, spirits; eat well, walk a good deal, and do some work without fatigue. I am off the sick list.

Lodging.—We have found a house up the hill, close to the town, an excellent place though very, very little. If I can get the landlord to agree to let us take it by the month just now, and let our month's rent count for the year in case we take it on, you may expect to hear we are again installed, and to receive a letter dated thus:—

La Solitude,
Hyères-les-Palmiers,
Var.

If the man won't agree to that, of course I must just give it up, as the house would be dear enough anyway at 2000 f. However, I hope we may get it, as it is healthy, cheerful, and close to shops, and society, and civilisation. The garden, which is above, is lovely, and will be cool in summer. There are two rooms below with a kitchen, and four rooms above, all told.—Ever your affectionate son, R. L. Stevenson.

To Thomas Stevenson

"Cassandra" was a nickname of the elder Mr. Stevenson for his daughter-in-law. The scheme of a play to be founded on *Great Expectations* was one of a hundred formed in these days and afterwards given up.

Hotel des Îles d'Or, but my address will be Chalet la Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, France, March 17, 1883

Dear Sir,—Your undated favour from Eastbourne came to hand in course of post, and I now hasten to acknowledge its receipt. We must ask you in future, for the convenience of our business arrangements, to struggle with and tread below your feet this most unsatisfactory and uncommercial habit. Our Mr. Cassandra is better; our Mr. Wogg expresses himself dissatisfied with our new place of business; when left alone in the front shop, he bawled like a parrot; it is supposed the offices are haunted.

To turn to the matter of your letter, your remarks on *Great Expectations* are very good. We have both re-read it this winter, and I, in a manner, twice. The object being a play; the play, in its rough outline, I now see: and it is extraordinary how much of Dickens had to be discarded as unhuman, impossible, and ineffective: all that really remains is the loan of a file (but from a grown-up young man who knows what he was doing, and to a convict who, although he does not know it is his father—the father knows it is his son), and the fact of the convict-father's return and dis-

closure of himself to the son whom he has made rich. Everything else has been thrown aside; and the position has had to be explained by a prologue which is pretty strong. I have great hopes of this piece, which is very amiable and, in places, very strong, indeed: but it was curious how Dickens had to be rolled away; he had made his story turn on such improbabilities, such fantastic trifles, not on a good human basis, such as I recognised. You are right about the casts, they were a capital idea; a good description of them at first, and then afterwards, say second, for the lawyer to have illustrated points out of the history of the originals, dusting the particular bust—that was all the development the thing would bear. Dickens killed them. The only really well *executed* scenes are the riverside ones; the escape in particular is excellent; and I may add, the capture of the two convicts at the beginning. Miss Havisham is, probably, the worst thing in human fiction. But Wemmick I like; and I like Trabb's boy; and Mr. Wopsle as Hamlet is splendid.

The weather here is greatly improved, and I hope in three days to be in the chalet. That is, if I get some money to float me there.

I hope you are all right again, and will keep better. The month of March is past its mid career; it must soon begin to turn toward the lamb; here it has already begun to do so; and I hope milder weather will pick you up. Wogg has eaten a forpet of rice and milk, his beard is streaming, his eyes wild. I am besieged by demands of work from America.

The £50 has just arrived; many thanks: I am now at ease.—Ever your affectionate son, *pro* Cassandra, Wogg and Co., R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, April,* 1883]

My head is singing with *Otto;* for the first two weeks I wrote and revised and only finished IV chapters:

last week, I have just drafted straight ahead, and I have just finished Chapter XI. It will want a heap of oversight and much will not stand, but the pace is good; about 28 *Cornhill* pp. drafted in seven days, and almost all of it dialogue—indeed I may say all, for I have dismissed the rest very summarily in the draft: one can always tickle at that. At the same rate, the draft should be finished in ten days more; and then I shall have the pleasure of beginning again at the beginning. Ah damned job! I have no idea whether or not *Otto* will be good. It is all pitched pretty high and stilted; almost like the Arabs, at that; but of course there is love-making in *Otto*, and indeed a good deal of it. I sometimes feel very weary; but the thing travels—and I like it when I am at it.

Remember me kindly to all.—Your ex-contributor,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Sitwell

His correspondent had at his request been writing and despatching to him fair copies of the various sets of verses for the *Child's Garden* (as the collection was ultimately called) which he had been from time to time sending home.

Chalet la Solitude, Hyères [*April*, 1883]

My dear Friend,—I am one of the lowest of the—but that's understood. I received the copy, excellently written, with I think only one slip from first to last. I have struck out two, and added five or six; so they now number forty-five; when they are fifty, they shall out on the world. I have not written a letter for a cruel time; I have been, and am, so busy, drafting a long story (for me, I mean), about a hundred *Cornhill* pages, or say about as long as the Donkey book: *Prince Otto* it is called, and is, at the present hour, a sore burthen but a hopeful. If I had him all drafted, I should whistle and sing. But no: then I'll have to rewrite him; and then there will be the publishers, alas!

But some time or other, I shall whistle and sing, I make no doubt.

I am going to make a fortune, it has not yet begun, for I am not yet clear of debt; but as soon as I can, I begin upon the fortune. I shall begin it with a halfpenny, and it shall end with horses and yachts and all the fun of the fair. This is the first real grey hair in my character: rapacity has begun to show, the greed of the protuberant guttler. Well, doubtless, when the hour strikes, we must all guttle and protube. But it comes hard on one who was always so willow-slender and as careless as the daisies.

Truly I am in excellent spirits. I have crushed through a financial crisis; Fanny is much better; I am in excellent health, and work from four to five hours a day—from one to two above my average, that is; and we all dwell together and make fortunes in the loveliest house you ever saw, with a garden like a fairy story, and a view like a classical landscape.

Little? Well, it is not large. And when you come to see us, you will probably have to bed at the hotel, which is hard by. But it is Eden, madam, Eden and Beulah and the Delectable Mountains and Eldorado and the Hesperidean Isles and Bimini.*

We both look forward, my dear friend, with the greatest eagerness to have you here. It seems it is not to be this season; but I appoint you with an appointment for next season. You cannot see us else: remember that. Till my health has grown solid like an oak-tree, till my fortune begins really to spread its boughs like the same monarch of the woods (and the acorn, ay de mi! is not yet planted), I expect to be a prisoner among the palms.

Yes, it is like old times to be writing you from the Riviera, and after all that has come and gone, who can predict anything? How fortune tumbles men about! Yet I have not found that they change their friends, thank God.

* The name of the Delectable Land in one of Heine's *Lieder*.

Both of our loves to your sister and yourself. As for me, if I am here and happy, I know to whom I owe it; I know who made my way for me in life, if that were all, and I remain, with love, your faithful friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To EDMUND GOSSE

"Gilder" in the following is of course the late R. W. Gilder, for many years the admirable editor of the *Century Magazine*.

Chalet la Solitude, Hyères [*April*, 1883]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I am very guilty; I should have written to you long ago; and now, though it must be done, I am so stupid that I can only boldly recapitulate. A phrase of three members is the outside of my syntax.

First, I liked the *Rover* better than any of your other verse. I believe you are right, and can make stories in verse. The last two stanzas and one or two in the beginning—but the two last above all—I thought excellent. I suggest a pursuit of the vein. If you want a good story to treat, get the *Memoirs of the Chevalier Johnstone*, and do his passage of the Tay; it would be excellent: the dinner in the field, the woman he has to follow, the dragoons, the timid boatmen, the brave lasses. It would go like a charm; look at it, and you will say you owe me one.

Second, Gilder asking me for fiction, I suddenly took a great resolve, and have packed off to him my new work, *The Silverado Squatters*. I do not for a moment suppose he will take it; but pray say all the good words you can for it. I should be awfully glad to get it taken. But if it does not mean dibbs at once, I shall be ruined for life. Pray write soon and beg Gilder your prettiest for a poor gentleman in pecuniary sloughs.

Fourth, next time I am supposed to be at death's door, write to me like a Christian, and let not your correspondence attend on business.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

P.S.—I see I have led you to conceive the *Squatters* are fiction. They are not, alas!

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Chalet la Solitude, May 5 [1883]

My dearest People,—I have had a great piece of news. There has been offered for *Treasure Island*—how much do you suppose? I believe it would be an excellent jest to keep the answer till my next letter. For two cents I would do so. Shall I? Anyway, I'll turn the page first. No—well—A hundred pounds, all alive, O! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden, minted quid. Is not this wonderful? Add that I have now finished, in drait, the fifteenth chapter of my novel, and have only five before me, and you will see what cause of gratitude I have.

The weather, to look at the per contra sheet, continues vomitable; and Fanny is quite out of sorts. But, really, with such cause of gladness, I have not the heart to be dispirited by anything. My child's verse book is finished, dedication and all, and out of my hands—you may tell Cummy; *Silverado* is done, too, and cast upon the waters; and this novel so near completion, it does look as if I should support myself without trouble in the future. If I have only health, I can, I thank God. It is dreadful to be a great, big man, and not be able to buy bread.

O that this may last!

I have to-day paid my rent for half the year, till the middle of September, and got my lease: why they have been so long, I know not.

I wish you all sorts of good things.

When is our marriage day?—Your loving and ecstatic son,

Treesure Eilaan.

It has been for me a Treasure Island verily.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères, May 8, 1883

My dear People,—I was disgusted to hear my father was not so well. I have a most troubled existence of work and business. But the work goes well, which is the great affair. I meant to have written a most delightful letter; too tired, however, and must stop. Perhaps I'll find time to add to it ere post.

I have returned refreshed from eating, but have little time, as Lloyd will go soon with the letters on his way to his tutor, Louis Robert (! ! ! !), with whom he learns Latin in French, and French, I suppose, in Latin, which seems to me a capital education. He, Lloyd, is a great bicycler already, and has been long distances; he is most new-fangled over his instrument, and does not willingly converse on other subjects.

Our lovely garden is a prey to snails; I have gathered about a bushel, which, not having the heart to slay, I steal forth withal and deposit near my neighbour's garden wall. As a case of casuistry, this presents many points of interest. I loathe the snails, but from loathing to actual butchery, trucidation of multitudes, there is still a step that I hesitate to take. What, then, to do with them? My neighbour's vineyard, pardy! It is a rich, villa, pleasure-garden of course; if it were a peasant's patch, the snails, I suppose, would have to perish.

The weather these last three days has been much better, though it is still windy and unkind. I keep splendidly well, and am cruelly busy, with mighty little time even for a walk. And to write at all, under such pressure, must be held to lean to virtue's side.

My financial prospects are shining. O if the health will hold, I should easily support myself.—Your ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var,
[*May* 20, 1883]

My dear Gosse,—I enclose the receipt and the corrections. As for your letter and Gilder's, I must take an hour or so to think; the matter much importing—to me. The £40 was a heavenly thing.

I send the MS. by Henley, because he acts for me in all matters, and had the thing, like all my other books, in his detention. He is my unpaid agent—an admirable arrangement for me, and one that has rather more than doubled my income on the spot.

If I have been long silent, think how long you were so and blush, sir, blush.

I was rendered unwell by the arrival of your cheque, and, like Pepys, "my hand still shakes to write of it." To this grateful emotion, and not to D. T., please attribute the raggedness of my hand.

This year I shall be able to live and keep my family on my own earnings, and that in spite of eight months and more of perfect idleness at the end of last and beginning of this. It is a sweet thought.

This spot our garden and our view, are sub-celestial. I sing daily with my Bunyan, that great bard,

"I dwell already the next door to Heaven!"

If you could see my roses, and my aloes, and my fig-marigolds, and my olives, and my view over a plain, and my view of certain mountains as graceful as Apollo, as severe as Zeus, you would not think the phrase exaggerated.

It is blowing to-day a *hot* mistral, which is the devil or a near connection of his.

This is to catch the post.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers,
Var, France, May 21, 1883

My dear Gosse,—The night giveth advice, generally bad advice; but I have taken it. And I have written direct to Gilder to tell him to keep the book * back and go on with it in November at his leisure. I do not know if this will come in time; if it doesn't, of course things will go on in the way proposed. The £40, or, as I prefer to put it, the 1000 francs, has been such a piercing sun-ray as my whole grey life is gilt withal. On the back of it I can endure. If these good days of Longman and the Century only last, it will be a very green world, this that we dwell in and that philosophers miscall. I have no taste for that philosophy; give me large sums paid on the receipt of the MS. and copyright reserved, and what do I care about the non-bëent? Only I know it can't last. The devil always has an imp or two in every house, and my imps are getting lively. The good lady, the dear, kind lady, the sweet, excellent lady, Nemesis, whom alone I adore, has fixed her wooden eye upon me. I fall prone; spare me, Mother Nemesis! But catch her!

I must now go to bed; for I have had a whoreson influenza cold, and have to lie down all day, and get up only to meals and the delights, June delights, of business correspondence.

You said nothing about my subject for a poem. Don't you like it? My own fishy eye has been fixed on it for prose, but I believe it could be thrown out finely in verse, and hence I resign and pass the hand. Twig the compliment?—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

* *Silverado Squatters.*

To W. E. Henley

"Tushery" had been a name in use between Stevenson and Mr. Henley for romances of the *Ivanhoe* type. He now applies it to his own tale of the Wars of the Roses, *The Black Arrow*, written for Mr. Henderson's *Young Folks*, of which the office was in Red Lion Square.

[*Hyères, May*, 1883]

. . . The influenza has busted me a good deal; I have no spring, and am headachy. So, as my good Red Lion Counter begged me for another Butcher's Boy—I turned me to—what thinkest 'ou? to Tushery, by the mass! Ay, friend, a whole tale of tushery. And every tusher tushes me so free, that may I be tushed if the whole thing is worth a tush. *The Black Arrow: A Tale of Tunstall Forest* is his name: tush! a poor thing!

Will *Treasure Island* proofs be coming soon, think you?

I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot John Silver in *Treasure Island*. Of course, he is not in any other quality or feature the least like you; but the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you.

Otto is, as you say, not a thing to extend my public on. It is queer and a little, little bit free; and some of the parties are immoral; and the whole thing is not a romance, nor yet a comedy; nor yet a romantic comedy: but a kind of preparation of some of the elements of all three in a glass jar. I think it is not without merit, but I am not always on the level of my argument, and some parts are false, and much of the rest is thin; it is more a triumph for myself than anything else; for I see, beyond it, better stuff. I have nine chapters ready, or almost ready, for press. My feeling would be to get it placed anywhere for as much as could be got for it, and rather in the shadow, till one saw the look of it in print.—Ever yours,

Pretty Sick.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, May, 1883

My dear Lad,—The books came some time since, but I have not had the pluck to answer: a shower of small troubles having fallen in, or troubles that may be very large.

I have had to incur a huge vague debt for cleaning sewers; our house was (of course) riddled with hidden cesspools, but that was infallible. I have the fever, and feel the duty to work very heavy on me at times; yet go it must. I have had to leave *Fontainebleau,* when three hours would finish it, and go full-tilt at tushery for a while. But it will come soon.

I think I can give you a good article on Hokusai; but that is for afterwards; *Fontainebleau* is first in hand.

By the way, my view is to give the *Penny Whistles* to Crane or Greenaway. But Crane, I think, is likeliest: he is a fellow who, at least, always does his best.

Shall I ever have money enough to write a play?

O dire necessity!

A word in your ear: I don't like trying to support myself. I hate the strain and the anxiety; and when unexpected expenses are foisted on me, I feel the world is playing with false dice.—Now I must Tush, adieu.

An Aching, Fevered, Penny-Journalist

A lytle Jape of tusherie
By A. Tusher.

The pleasant river gushes
  Among the meadows green;
At home the author tushes;
  For him it flows unseen.

The Birds among the Bŭshes
  May wanton on the spray;
But vain for him who tushes
  The brightness of the day!

The frog among the rushes
  Sits singing in the blue.
By'r la'kin! but these tushes
  Are wearisome to do!

The task entirely crushes
  The spirit of the bard:
God pity him who tushes—
  His task is very hard.

The filthy gutter slushes,
  The clouds are full of rain,
But doomed is he who tushes
  To tush and tush again.

At morn with his hair-brushes,
  Still "tush" he says, and weeps;
At night again he tushes,
  And tushes till he sleeps.

And when at length he pŭshes
  Beyond the river dark—
'Las, to the man who tushes,
  "Tush" shall be God's remark!

To Sidney Colvin

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, May,* 1883]

Colvin,—The attempt to correspond with you is vain. Well, well, then so be it. I will from time to time write you an insulting letter, brief but monstrous harsh. I regard you in the light of a genteel impostor. Your name figures in the papers but never to a piece of letter-paper: well, well.

News. I am well: Fanny been ill but better: *Otto* about three-quarters done; *Silverado* proofs a terrible job—it is a most unequal work—new wine in old bottles—large rats, small bottles *: as usual, penniless—

* The allusion is to a specimen I had been used to hear quoted of the Duke of Wellington's table-talk in his latter years. He had said that musk-rats were sometimes kept alive in bottles in India. Curate, or other meek dependent: "I presume, your Grace, they are small rats and large bottles." His Grace: "No, large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles; large rats, small bottles."

O but penniless: still, with four articles in hand (say £35) and the £100 for *Silverado* imminent, not hopeless.

Why am I so penniless, ever, ever penniless, ever, ever
penny-penny-penniless and dry?
The birds upon the thorn,
The poppies in the corn,
They surely are more fortunate or prudenter than I!

In Arabia, everybody is called the Father of something or other for convenience or insult's sake. Thus you are "the Father of Prints," or of "Bummkopferies," or "Father of Unanswered Correspondence." They would instantly dub Henley "the Father of Wooden Legs"; me they would denominate the "Father of Bones," and Matthew Arnold "the Father of Eyeglasses."

I have accepted most of the excisions. Proposed titles—

The Innocent Muse.
A Child's Garden of Rhymes.
Songs of the Playroom.
Nursery Songs.

I like the first?

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères, May or June, 1883

Dear Lad,—Snatches in return for yours; for this little once, I'm well to windward of you.

Seventeen chapters of *Otto* are now drafted, and finding I was working through my voice and getting screechy, I have turned back again to rewrite the earlier part. It has, I do believe, some merit: of what order, of course, I am the last to know; and, triumph of triumphs, my wife—my wife who hates and loathes and

slates my women—admits a great part of my Countess to be on the spot.

Yes, I could borrow, but it is the joy of being before the public, for once. Really, £100 is a sight more than *Treasure Island* is worth.

The reason of my *dèche?* Well, if you begin one house, have to desert it, begin another, and are eight months without doing any work, you will be in a *dèche* too. I am not in a *dèche*, however; *distinguo*—I would fain distinguish; I am rather a swell, but *not solvent.* At a touch the edifice, *ædificium*, might collapse. If my creditors began to babble around me, I would sink with a slow strain of music into the crimson west. The difficulty in my elegant villa is to find oil, *oleum*, for the dam axles. But I've paid my rent until September; and beyond the chemist, the grocer, the baker, the doctor, the gardener, Lloyd's teacher, and the great chief creditor Death, I can snap my fingers at all men. Why will people spring bills on you? I try to make 'em charge me at the moment; they won't, the money goes, the debt remains.—The Required Play is in the *Merry Men.*

Q. E. F.

I thus render honour to your *flair;* it came on me of a clap; I do not see it yet beyond a kind of sunset glory. But it's there: passion, romance, the picturesque, involved: startling, simple, horrid: a sea-pink in sea-froth! *S'agit de la désenterrer.* "Help!" cries a buried masterpiece.

Once I see my way to the year's end, clear, I turn to plays; till then I grind at letters; finish *Otto;* write, say, a couple of my *Traveller's Tales;* and then, if all my ships come home, I will attack the drama in earnest. I cannot mix the skeins. Thus, though I'm morally sure there is a play in *Otto,* I dare not look for it: I shoot straight at the story.

As a story, a comedy, I think *Otto* very well constructed; the echoes are very good, all the sentiments

change round, and the points of view are continually, and, I think (if you please), happily contrasted. None of it is exactly funny, but some of it is smiling.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The verses alluded to are some of those afterwards collected in *Underwoods*.

[*Chalet la Solitude, Hyères, May or June*, 1883]

Dear Henley,—You may be surprised to hear that I am now a great writer of verses; that is, however, so. I have the mania now like my betters, and faith, if I live till I am forty, I shall have a book of rhymes like Pollock, Gosse, or whom you please. Really, I have begun to learn some of the rudiments of that trade, and have written three or four pretty enough pieces of octosyllabic nonsense, semi-serious, semi-smiling. A kind of prose Herrick, divested of the gift of verse, and you behold the Bard. But I like it.

R. L. S.

To Mr. Simoneau

This friend was the keeper of the inn and restaurant where Stevenson had boarded at Monterey in the autumn of 1879. In writing French, as will be seen, Stevenson's grip both of idiom and grammar was apt to be shaky.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, May or June*, 1883]

Mon cher et bon Simoneau,—J'ai commencé plusieurs fois de vous écrire; et voilà-t-il pas qu'un empêchement quelconque est arrivé toujours. La lettre ne part pas; et je vous laisse toujours dans le droit de soupçonner mon cœur. Mon bon ami, ne pensez pas que je vous ai oublié ou que je vous oublierai jamais. Il n'en est de rien. Votre bon souvenir me tient de bien près, et je le garderai jusqu'à la mort.

J'ai failli mourir de bien près; mais me voici bien rétabli, bien que toujours un peu chétif et malingre.

J'habite, comme vous voyez, la France. Je travaille beaucoup, et je commence à ne pas être le dernier; déjà on me dispute ce que j'écris, et je n'ai pas à me plaindre de ce que l'on appelle les honoraires. Me voici alors très affairé, très heureux dans mon ménage, gâté par ma femme, habitant la plus petite maisonette dans le plus beau jardin du monde, et voyant de mes fenêtres la mer, les isles d'Hyères, et les belles collines, montagnes et forts de Toulon.

Et vous, mon très cher ami? Comment celà va-t-il? Comment vous portez-vous? Comment va le commerce? Comment aimez vous le pays? et l'enfant? et la femme? Et enfin toutes les questions possibles. Ecrivez-moi donc bien vite, cher Simoneau. Et quant à moi, je vous promets que vous entendrez bien vîte parler de moi; je vous *récrirai* sous peu, et je vous enverrai un de mes livres. Ceci n'est qu'un serrement de main, *from the bottom of my heart, dear and kind old man.*—Your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

The "new dictionary" means, of course, the great Oxford Dictionary of the English Language, edited by Dr. J. A. H. Murray, which had been appearing in instalments since 1878.

La Solitude, Hyères [*June,* 1883]

DEAR LAD,—I was delighted to hear the good news about ——. Bravo, he goes uphill fast. Let him beware of vanity, and he will go higher; let him be still discontented, and let him (if it might be) see the merits and not the faults of his rivals, and he may swarm at last to the top-gallant. There is no other way. Admiration is the only road to excellence; and the critical spirit kills, but envy and injustice are putrefaction on its feet.

Thus far the moralist. The eager author now begs to know whether you may have got the other Whistles,

and whether a fresh proof is to be taken; also whether in that case the dedication should not be printed therewith; *B*ulk *D*elights *P*ublishers (original aphorism; to be said sixteen times in succession as a test of sobriety).

Your wild and ravening commands were received; but cannot be obeyed. And anyway, I do assure you I am getting better every day; and if the weather would but turn, I should soon be observed to walk in hornpipes. Truly I am on the mend. I am still very careful. I have the new dictionary; a joy, a thing of beauty, and—bulk. I shall be raked i' the mools before it's finished; that is the only pity; but meanwhile I sing.

I beg to inform you that I, Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Brashiana* and other works, am merely beginning to commence to prepare to make a first start at trying to understand my profession. O the height and depth of novelty and worth in any art! and O that I am privileged to swim and shoulder through such oceans! Could one get out of sight of land—all in the blue! Alas not, being anchored here in flesh, and the bonds of logic being still about us.

But what a great space and a great air there is in these small shallows where alone we venture! and how new each sight, squall, calm, or sunrise! An art is a fine fortune, a palace in a park, a band of music, health, and physical beauty; all but love—to any worthy practiser. I sleep upon my art for a pillow; I waken in my art; I am unready for death, because I hate to leave it. I love my wife, I do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her; but while I can conceive my being widowed, I refuse the offering of life without my art. I *am* not but in my art; it is me; I am the body of it merely.

And yet I produce nothing, am the author of *Brashiana* and other works: tiddy-iddity—as if the works one wrote were anything but 'prentice's experiments. Dear reader, I deceive you with husks, the real works and all the pleasure are still mine and incommunicable.

After this break in my work, beginning to return to it, as from light sleep, I wax exclamatory, as you see.

Sursum Corda:
Heave ahead:
Here's luck.
Art and Blue Heaven,
April and God's Larks.
Green reeds and the sky-scattering river.
A stately music.
Enter God.

R. L. S.

Ay, but you know, until a man can write that "Enter God," he has made no art! None! Come, let us take counsel together and make some!

To Thomas Stevenson

"Clark" in the following letter is the famous physician Sir Andrew Clark: the "delicious rhapsody of anger" mentioned as enclosed is not forthcoming.

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, June 15th, 1883

My dear Father,—Your letter telling me of Clark's better opinion was very welcome. I did not like your getting thin, until I began to remember that it is natural at a certain age. I am not particularly brilliant to-day and cannot get off much in the way of a letter. I am working hard, without much difficulty; but I can do little else. I find rather a despair at looking forward. To be condemned to produce till death do set me free, came upon me with a horror; and I was nearly sick of my trade. Only the next moment, I remembered if I had been in any other, I should most likely be able to do nothing at all; and this consoled me.

I have got two editions, one at a dollar and one at tenpence, of the *Arabian Nights*, and a really handsome dollar edition of the *Inland Voyage*, sent to me from

the States by semi-repentant publishers. Also this delicious rhapsody of anger which I enclose. I shall give over the books of my mother when we meet, though with a grudge. My mother will have to bring the review book; I pine for it. I also inclose another review; so whatever you think of my letter, you cannot say I have not sent you reading. Fanny is fairly well; and Lloyd, who was peepy, is better.

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Trevor Haddon

During the height of the Provençal summer, for July and part of August, Stevenson went with his wife to the Baths of Royat in Auvergne (travelling necessarily by way of Clermont-Ferrand). His parents joined them at Royat for part of their visit. This and possibly the next following letters were written during the trip. The news here referred to was that his correspondent had won a scholarship at the Slade School.

La Solitude, Hyères. But just now writing from Clermont-Ferrand, July 5, 1883

Dear Mr. Haddon,—Your note with its piece of excellent news duly reached me. I am delighted to hear of your success: selfishly so; for it is pleasant to see that one whom I suppose I may call an admirer is no fool. I wish you more and more prosperity, and to be devoted to your art. An art is the very gist of life; it grows with you; you will never weary of an art at which you fervently and superstitiously labour. Superstitiously: I mean, think more of it than it deserves; be blind to its faults, as with a wife or father; forget the world in a technical trifle. The world is very serious; art is the cure of that, and must be taken very lightly; but to take art lightly, you must first be stupidly owlishly in earnest over it. When I made Casimir say "Tiens" at the end, I made a blunder. I thought it was what Casimir would have said and I put it down. As your question shows, it should have been left out. It was a "patch" of realism, and an anti-climax. Be-

ware of realism; it is the devil: 'tis one of the means of art, and now they make it the end! And such is the farce of the age in which a man lives, that we all, even those of us who most detest it, sin by realism.

Notes for the student of any art.

1. Keep an intelligent eye upon *all* the others. It is only by doing so that you come to see what Art is: Art is the end common to them all, it is none of the points by which they differ.

2. In this age beware of realism.

3. In your own art, bow your head over technique. Think of technique when you rise and when you go to bed. Forget purposes in the meanwhile; get to love technical processes; to glory in technical successes; get to see the world entirely through technical spectacles, to see it entirely in terms of what you can do. Then when you have anything to say, the language will be apt and copious.

My health is better.

I have no photograph just now; but when I get one you shall have a copy. It will not be like me; sometimes I turn out a capital, fresh bank clerk; once I came out the image of Runjeet Singh; again the treacherous sun has fixed me in the character of a travelling evangelist.

It's quite a lottery; but whatever the next venture proves to be, soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, you shall have a proof. Reciprocate. The truth is I have no appearance; a certain air of disreputability is the one constant character that my face presents: the rest change like water. But still I am lean, and still disreputable.

Cling to your youth. It is an artistic stock in trade. Don't give in that you are ageing, and you won't age. I have exactly the same faults and qualities still; only a little duller, greedier and better tempered; a little less tolerant of pain and more tolerant of tedium. The last is a great thing for life but—query?—a bad endowment for art?

Another note for the art student.

4. See the good in other people's work; it will never be yours. See the bad in your own, and don't cry about it; it will be there always. Try to use your faults; at any rate use your knowledge of them, and don't run your head against stone walls. Art is not like theology; nothing is forced. You have not to represent the world. You have to represent only what you can represent with pleasure and effect, and the only way to find out what that is is by technical exercise.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mr. Simoneau

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer,* 1883]

MY DEAR FRIEND SIMONEAU,—It would be difficult to tell how glad I was to get your letter with your good news and kind remembrances, it did my heart good to the bottom. I shall never forget the good time we had together, the many long talks, the games of chess, the flute on an occasion, and the excellent food. Now I am in clover, only my health a mere ruined temple; the ivy grows along its shattered front, otherwise, I have no wish that is not fulfilled: a beautiful large garden, a fine view of plain, sea and mountain; a wife that suits me down to the ground, and a barrel of good Beaujolais. To this I must add that my books grow steadily more popular, and if I could only avoid illness I should be well to do for money, as it is, I keep pretty near the wind. Have I other means? I doubt it. I saw François here; and it was in some respects sad to see him, pining in the ungenial life and not, I think, very well pleased with his relatives. The young men, it is true, adored him, but his niece tried to pump me about what money I had, with an effrontery I was glad to disappoint. How he spoke of you I need not tell you. He is your true friend, dear Simoneau, and

your ears should have tingled when we met, for we talked of little but yourself.

The papers you speak about are past dates but I will send you a paper from time to time, as soon as I am able to go out again. We were both well pleased to hear of your marriage, and both Mrs. Stevenson and myself beg to be remembered with the kindest wishes to Mrs. Simoneau. I am glad you have done this. All races are better away from their own country; but I think you French improve the most of all. At home, I like you well enough, but give me the Frenchman abroad! Had you stayed at home, you would probably have acted otherwise. Consult your consciousness, and you will think as I do. How about a law condemning the people of every country to be educated in another, to change sons in short? Should we not gain all around? Would not the Englishman unlearn hypocrisy? Would not the Frenchman learn to put some heart into his friendships? I name what strikes me as the two most obvious defects of the two nations. The French might also learn to be a little less rapacious to women and the English to be a little more honest.

Indeed their merits and defects make a balance.

The English.	The French.
hypocrites	free from hypocrisy
good, stout reliable friends	incapable of friendship
dishonest to the root	fairly honest
fairly decent to women.	rather indecent to women.

There is my table, not at all the usual one, but yes, I think you will agree with it. And by travel, each race can cure much of its defects and acquire much of the others' virtues. Let us say that you and I are complete!! You are anyway: I would not change a hair of you. The Americans hold the English faults: dishonest and hypocrites, perhaps not so strongly but still to the exclusion of others. It is strange that such mean defects should be so hard to eradicate, after a century

of separation, and so great an admixture of other blood.

Your stay in Mexico must have been interesting indeed: and it is natural you should be so keen against the Church on this side, we have a painful exhibition of the other side: the *librepenseur* a mere priest without the sacraments, the narrowest tyranny of intolerance popular, and in fact a repetition in the XIXth century of theological ill-feeling minus the sermons. We have speeches instead. I met the other day one of the new lay schoolmasters of France; a pleasant cultivated man, and for some time listened to his ravings. "In short," I said, "you are like Louis Quatorze, you wish to drive out of France all who do not agree with you." I thought he would protest; not he!—"Oui, Monsieur," was his answer. And that is the cause of liberty and free thought! But the race of man was born tyrannical; doubtless Adam beat Eve, and when all the rest are dead the last man will be found beating the last dog. In the land of Padre d. R. you see the old tyranny still active on its crutches; in this land, I begin to see the new, a fat fellow, out of leading-strings and already killing flies.

This letter drones along unprofitably enough. Let me put a period to my divagations. Write again soon, and let me hear good news of you, and I will try to be more quick of answer.

And with the best wishes to yourself and all your family, believe me, your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To ALISON CUNNINGHAM

The persons mentioned below in the third paragraph are cousins of the writer and playmates of his childhood; two of them, christened Lewis like himself after their Balfour grandfather, had been nicknamed after their birthplaces "Delhi" and "Cramond" to avoid confusion. Mount Chessie is a beautiful place near Lasswade: "Cummy" has described his delight when she cut whistles for him there out of a plane-tree.

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer,* 1883]

MY DEAR CUMMY,—Yes, I own I am a real bad correspondent, and am as bad as can be in most directions.

I have been adding some more poems to your book. I wish they would look sharp about it; but, you see, they are trying to find a good artist to make the illustrations, without which no child would give a kick for it. It will be quite a fine work, I hope. The dedication is a poem too, and has been quite a long while written, but I do not mean you to see it till you get the book; keep the jelly for the last, you know, as you would often recommend in former days, so now you can take your own medicine.

I am very sorry to hear you have been so poorly; I have been very well; it used to be quite the other way, used it not? Do you remember making the whistle at Mount Chessie? I do not think it *was* my knife; I believe it was yours; but rhyme is a very great monarch, and goes before honesty, in these affairs at least. Do you remember, at Warriston, one autumn Sunday, when the beech nuts were on the ground, seeing heaven open? I would like to make a rhyme of that, but cannot.

Is it not strange to think of all the changes: Bob, Cramond, Delhi, Minnie, and Henrietta, all married, and fathers and mothers, and your humble servant just the one point better off? And such a little while ago all children together! The time goes swift and wonderfully even; and if we are no worse than we are, we should be grateful to the power that guides us. For more than a generation I have now been to the fore in this rough world, and been most tenderly helped, and done cruelly wrong, and yet escaped; and here I am still, the worse for wear, but with some fight in me still, and not unthankful—no, surely not unthankful, or I were then the worst of human beings!

My little dog is a very much better child in every way, both more loving and more amiable; but he is not

fond of strangers, and is, like most of his kind, a great, specious humbug.

Fanny has been ill, but is much better again; she now goes donkey rides with an old woman, who compliments her on her French. That old woman—seventy odd—is in a parlous spiritual state.

Pretty soon, in the new sixpenny illustrated magazine, Wogg's picture is to appear: this is a great honour! And the poor soul, whose vanity would just explode if he could understand it, will never be a bit the wiser!—With much love, in which Fanny joins, believe me, your affectionate boy,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To EDMUND GOSSE

The reference is to Mr. Gosse's volume called *Seventeenth Century Studies.*

[*Hyères or Royat, Summer,* 1883]

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I have now leisurely read your volume; pretty soon, by the way, you will receive one of mine.

It is a pleasant, instructive, and scholarly volume. The three best being, quite out of sight—Crashaw, Otway, and Etherege. They are excellent; I hesitate between them; but perhaps Crashaw is the most brilliant.

Your Webster is not my Webster; nor your Herrick my Herrick. On these matters we must fire a gun to leeward, show our colours, and go by. Argument is impossible. They are two of my favourite authors: Herrick above all: I suppose they are two of yours. Well, Janus-like, they do behold us two with diverse countenances, few features are common to these different avatars; and we can but agree to differ, but still with gratitude to our entertainers, like two guests at the same dinner, one of whom takes clear and one white soup. By my way of thinking, neither of us need be wrong.

The other papers are all interesting, adequate, clear, and with a pleasant spice of the romantic. It is a book you may be well pleased to have so finished, and will do you much good. The Crashaw is capital: capital; I like the taste of it. Preface clean and dignified. The handling throughout workmanlike, with some four or five touches of preciosity, which I regret.

With my thanks for information, entertainment, and a pleasurable envy here and there.—Yours affectionately, R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

Soon after he was settled again at Hyères, Stevenson had a great shock in the death of one of the oldest and most intimate of his friends of Edinburgh days, Mr. James Walter Ferrier (see the essay *Old Mortality* in *Memories and Portraits*). It is in accordance with the expressed wish of this gentleman's surviving sister that publicity is given to the following letters:—

La Solitude, Hyères [*Sept.*, 1883]

My dear Miss Ferrier,—They say Walter is gone. You, who know how I have neglected him, will conceive my remorse. I had another letter written; when I heard he was worse, I promised myself to wake up for the last time. Alas, too late!

My dear Walter, set apart that terrible disease, was, in his right mind, the best and gentlest gentleman. God knows he would never intentionally hurt a soul.

Well, he is done with his troubles and out of his long sickness, and I dare say is glad to be at peace and out of the body, which in him seemed the enemy of the fine and kind spirit. He is the first friend I have ever lost, and I find it difficult to say anything and fear to intrude upon your grief. But I had to try to tell you how much I shared it.

Could you get any one to tell me particulars? Do not write yourself of course—I do not mean that; but some one else.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

La Solitude, Hyères, September 19, 1883

Dear Boy,—Our letters vigorously cross: you will ere this have received a note to Coggie: God knows what was in it.

It is strange, a little before the first word you sent me—so late—kindly late, I know and feel—I was thinking in my bed, when I knew you I had six friends—Bob I had by nature; then came the good James Walter—with all his failings—the *gentleman* of the lot, alas to sink so low, alas to do so little, but now, thank God, in his quiet rest; next I found Baxter—well do I remember telling Walter I had unearthed "a W.S. that I thought would do"—it was in the Academy Lane, and he questioned me as to the Signet's qualifications; fourth came Simpson; somewhere about the same time, I began to get intimate with Jenkin; last came Colvin. Then, one black winter afternoon, long Leslie Stephen, in his velvet jacket, met me in the Spec. by appointment, took me over to the infirmary, and in the crackling, blighting gaslight showed me that old head whose excellent representation I see before me in the photograph. Now when a man has six friends, to introduce a seventh is usually hopeless. Yet when you were presented, you took to them and they to you upon the nail. You must have been a fine fellow; but what a singular fortune I must have had in my six friends that you should take to all. I don't know if it is good Latin, most probably not: but this is enscrolled before my eyes for Walter: *Tandem e nubibus in apricum properat.* Rest, I suppose, I know, was all that remained; but O to look back, to remember all the mirth, all the kindness, all the humorous limitations and loved defects of that character; to think that he was young with me, sharing that weather-beaten, Fergussonian youth, looking forward through the clouds to the sunburst; and now clean gone from my path, silent—well, well. This

has been a strange awakening. Last night, when I was alone in the house, with the window open on the lovely still night, I could have sworn he was in the room with me; I could show you the spot; and, what was very curious, I heard his rich laughter, a thing I had not called to mind for I know not how long.

I see his coral waistcoat studs that he wore the first time he dined in my house; I see his attitude, leaning back a little, already with something of a portly air, and laughing internally. How I admired him! And now in the West Kirk.

I am trying to write out this haunting bodily sense of absence; besides, what else should I write of?

Yes, looking back, I think of him as one who was good, though sometimes clouded. He was the only gentle one of all my friends, save perhaps the other Walter. And he was certainly the only modest man among the lot. He never gave himself away; he kept back his secret; there was always a gentle problem behind all. Dear, dear, what a wreck; and yet how pleasant is the retrospect! God doeth all things well, though by what strange, solemn, and murderous contrivances!

It is strange: he was the only man I ever loved who did not habitually interrupt. The fact draws my own portrait. And it is one of the many reasons why I count myself honoured by his friendship. A man like you *had* to like me; you could not help yourself; but Ferrier was above me, we were not equals; his true self humoured and smiled paternally upon my failings, even as I humoured and sorrowed over his.

Well, first his mother, then himself, they are gone: "in their resting graves."

When I come to think of it, I do not know what I said to his sister, and I fear to try again. Could you send her this? There is too much both about yourself and me in it; but that, if you do not mind, is but a mark of sincerity. It would let her know how entirely, in the mind of (I suppose) his oldest friend, the good,

true Ferrier obliterates the memory of the other, who was only his "lunatic brother."

Judge of this for me, and do as you please; anyway, I will try to write to her again; my last was some kind of scrawl that I could not see for crying. This came upon me, remember, with terrible suddenness; I was surprised by this death; and it is fifteen or sixteen years since first I saw the handsome face in the Spec. I made sure, besides, to have died first. Love to you, your wife, and her sisters.—Ever yours, dear boy,

R. L. S.

I never knew any man so superior to himself as poor James Walter. The best of him only came as a vision, like Corsica from the Corniche. He never gave his measure either morally or intellectually. The curse was on him. Even his friends did not know him but by fits. I have passed hours with him when he was so wise, good, and sweet, that I never knew the like of it in any other. And for a beautiful good humour he had no match. I remember breaking in upon him once with a whole-red-hot story (in my worst manner), pouring words upon him by the hour about some truck not worth an egg that had befallen me; and suddenly, some half hour after, finding that the sweet fellow had some concern of his own of infinitely greater import, that he was patiently and smilingly waiting to consult me on. It sounds nothing; but the courtesy and the unselfishness were perfect. It makes me rage to think how few knew him, and how many had the chance to sneer at their better.

Well, he was not wasted, that we know; though if anything looked liker irony than this fitting of a man out with these rich qualities and faculties to be wrecked and aborted from the very stocks, I do not know the name of it. Yet we see that he has left an influence; the memory of his patient courtesy has often checked me in rudeness; has it not you?

You can form no idea of how handsome Walter was.

At twenty he was splendid to see; then, too, he had the sense of power in him, and great hopes; he looked forward, ever jesting of course, but he looked to see himself where he had the right to expect. He believed in himself profoundly; but *he never disbelieved in others.* To the roughest Highland student he always had his fine, kind, open dignity of manner; and a good word behind his back.

The last time that I saw him before leaving for America—it was a sad blow to both of us. When he heard I was leaving, and that might be the last time we might meet—it almost was so—he was terribly upset, and came round at once. We sat late, in Baxter's empty house, where I was sleeping. My dear friend Walter Ferrier: O if I had only written to him more! if only one of us in these last days had been well! But I ever cherished the honour of his friendship, and now when he is gone, I know what I have lost still better. We live on, meaning to meet; but when the hope is gone, the pang comes.

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

La Solitude, Hyères, 26th September, 1883

My dear Gosse,—It appears a bolt from Transatlantica is necessary to produce four lines from you. It is not flattering; but as I was always a bad correspondent, 'tis a vice to which I am lenient. I give you to know, however, that I have already twice (this makes three times) sent you what I please to call a letter, and received from you in return a subterfuge—or nothing. . . .

My present purpose, however, which must not be postponed, is to ask you to telegraph to the Americans.

After a summer of good health of a very radiant order, toothache, and the death of a very old friend, which came upon me like a thunder-clap, have rather shelved my powers. I stare upon the paper, not write. I wish I could write like your Sculptors; yet I am well

aware that I should not try in that direction. A certain warmth (tepid enough) and a certain dash of the picturesque are my poor essential qualities; and if I went fooling after the too classical, I might lose even these. But I envied you that page.

I am, of course, deep in schemes; I was so ever. Execution alone somewhat halts. How much do you make per annum, I wonder? This year, for the first time, I shall pass £300; I may even get halfway to the next milestone. This seems but a faint remuneration; and the devil of it is, that I manage, with sickness, and moves, and education, and the like, to keep steadily in front of my income. However, I console myself with this, that if I were anything else under God's Heaven, and had the same crank health, I should make an even zero. If I had, with my present knowledge, twelve months of my old health, I would, could, and should do something neat. As it is, I have to tinker at my things in little sittings; and the rent, or the butcher, or something, is always calling me off to rattle up a pot-boiler. And then comes a back-set of my health, and I have to twiddle my fingers and play patience.

Well, I do not complain, but I do envy strong health where it is squandered. Treasure your strength, and may you never learn by experience the profound *ennui* and irritation of the shelved artist. For then, what is life? All that one has done to make one's life effective then doubles the itch of inefficiency.

I trust also you may be long without finding out the devil that there is in a bereavement. After love it is the one great surprise that life preserves for us. Now I don't think I can be astonished any more.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

La Solitude, Hyères, 30th Sept., 1883

My dear Miss Ferrier,—I am very much obliged to you for your letter and was interested by all you told

me. Yes, I know it is better for him to be gone, and what you say helps me to realise that it is so—I did not know how much he had suffered; it is so that we are cured of life. I am a little afraid to write or think much of Walter just yet; as I have not quite recovered the news and I have my work and my wife to think of.

Some day soon when the sharpness passes off (if it does) I must try to write some more of what he was: he was so little understood. I don't suppose any one knew him better than I did. But just now it is difficult to think of him. For you I do mourn indeed, and admire your courage: the loss is terrible. I have no portrait of him. Is there one? If so please let me have it: if it has to be copied please let it be.

Henley seems to have been as good to dear Walter as he is to all. That introduction was a good turn I did to both. It seems so strange for a friendship to begin all these years ago with so much mirth and now to end with this sorrow. Our little lives are moments in the wake of the eternal silence; but how crowded while they last. His has gone down in peace.

I was not certainly the best companion for Walter, but I do believe I was the best he had. In these early days he was not fortunate in friends—looking back I see most clearly how much we both wanted a man of riper wisdom. We had no religion between the pair of us—that was the flaw. How very different was our last intimacy in Gladstone Terrace. But youth must learn—looking back over these wasted opportunities, I must try rather to remember what I did right, than to bewail the much that I left undone and knew not how to do. I see that even you have allowed yourself to have regrets. Dear Miss Ferrier, sure you were his angel. We all had something to be glad of, in so far as we had understood and loved and perhaps a little helped the gentle spirit; but you may certainly be proud. He always loved you; and I remember in his worst days spoke of you with great affection; a thing unusual with him; for he was walking very wild and

blind and had no true idea whether of himself or life. The lifting afterwards was beautiful and touching. Dear Miss Ferrier I have given your kind messages to my wife who feels for you and reciprocates the hope to meet. When it may come off I know not. I feel almost ashamed to say that I keep better, I feel as if like Mrs. Leslie " you must hate me for it "—still I can very easily throw back whether by fatigue or want of care, and I do not like to build plans for my return to my own land. Is there no chance of your coming hereabouts? Though we cannot in our small and disorderly house offer a lady a room, one can be got close by and we can offer possible board and a most lovely little garden for a lounge. Please remember me kindly to your brother John and Sir A. and Lady Grant and believe me with hearty sympathy—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I was rejoiced to hear he never doubted of my love, but I must cure my hate of correspondence. This has been a sharp lesson.

To W. E. HENLEY

It will be remembered that "Whistles" or "Penny Whistles" was his own name for the verses of the *Child's Garden*. The proposal referred to at the end of this letter was one which had reached him from Messrs. Lippincott, the American publishers, for a sailing trip to be taken among the Greek Islands and made the subject of a book.

La Solitude, Hyères [*October*, 1883]

My dear excellent, admired, volcanic angel of a lad, trusty as a dog, eruptive as Vesuvius, in all things great, in all the soul of loyalty: greeting.

That you are better spirits me up good. I have had no colour of a *Mag. of Art*. From here, here in High-airs the Palm-trees, I have heard your conversation. It came here in the form of a Mistral, and I said to my-

self, Damme, there is some Henley at the foot of this!

I shall try to do the Whistle as suggested; but I can usually do whistles only by giving my whole mind to it: to produce even such limping verse demanding the whole forces of my untuneful soul. I have other two anyway: better or worse. I am now deep, deep, ocean deep in *Otto:* a letter is a curst distraction, about 100 pp. are near fit for publication; I am either making a spoon or spoiling the horn of a Caledonian bull, with that airy potentate. God help me, I bury a lot of labour in that principality; and if I am not greatly a gainer, I am a great loser and a great fool. However, *sursum corda;* faint heart never writ romance.

Your *Dumas* I think exquisite; it might even have been stronglier said: the brave old godly pagan, I adore his big footprints on the earth.

Have you read Meredith's *Love in the Valley?* It got me, I wept; I remembered that poetry existed.

"When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror."

I propose if they (Lippincotts) will let me wait till next Autumn, and go when it is safest, to accept £450 with £100 down; but it is now too late to go this year. November and December are the months when it is safest; and the back of the season is broken. I shall gain much knowledge by the trip; this I look upon as one of the main inducements.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The following is in answer to a letter containing remarks on the proofs of the *Child's Garden,* then going round among some of his friends, and on the instalments of *Silverado Squatters* and the *Black Arrow,* which were appearing in the *Century Magazine* and *Young Folks* respectively. The remarks on Professor Seeley's literary manner were suggested by the *Expansion of England,* which I had lately sent him.

La Solitude, Hyères [*October* 1883]

Colvin, Colvin, Colvin,—Yours received; also interesting copy of *P. Whistles*. "In the multitude of councillors the Bible declares there is wisdom," said my great-uncle, "but I have always found in them distraction." It is extraordinary how tastes vary: these proofs have been handed about, it appears, and I have had several letters; and—distraction. Æsop: the Miller and the Ass.

Notes on details:—

1. I love the occasional trochaic line; and so did many excellent writers before me.

2. If you don't like *A Good Boy*, I do.

3. In *Escape at Bedtime*, I found two suggestions. "Shove" for "above" is a correction of the press; it was so written. "Twinkled" is just the error; to the child the stars appear to be there; any word that suggests illusion is a horror.

4. I don't care; I take a different view of the vocative.

5. Bewildering and childering are good enough for me. These are rhymes, jingles; I don't go for eternity and the three unities.

I will delete some of those condemned, but not all. I don't care for the name Penny Whistles; I sent a sheaf to Henley when I sent 'em. But I've forgot the others. I would just as soon call 'em "Rimes for Children" as anything else. I am not proud nor particular.

Your remarks on the *Black Arrow* are to the point. I am pleased you liked Crookback; he is a fellow whose hellish energy has always fixed my attention. I wish Shakespeare had written the play after he had learned some of the rudiments of literature and art rather than before. Some day, I will re-tickle the Sable Missile, and shoot it, *moyennant finances*, once more into the air; I can lighten it of much, and devote some more attention to Dick o' Gloucester. It's great sport to write tushery.

By this I reckon you will have heard of my proposed

excursiolorum to the Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, and kindred sites. If the excursiolorum goes on, that is, if *moyennant finances* comes off, I shall write to beg you to collect introductiolorums for me.

Distinguo: 1. *Silverado* was not written in America, but in Switzerland's icy mountains. 2. What you read is the bleeding and disembowelled remains of what I wrote. 3. The good stuff is all to come—so I think. "The Sea Fogs," "The Hunter's Family," "Toils and Pleasures"—*belles pages*.—Yours ever,

RAMNUGGER.

O!—Seeley is too clever to live, and the book a gem. But why has he read too much Arnold? Why will he avoid—obviously avoid—fine writing up to which he has led? This is a winking, curled-and-oiled, ultra-cultured, Oxford-don sort of an affectation that infuriates my honest soul. "You see"—they say—"how unbombastic *we* are; we come right up to eloquence, and, when it's hanging on the pen, dammy, we scorn it!" It is literary Derondaism. If you don't want the woman, the image, or the phrase, mortify your vanity and avoid the appearance of wanting them.

To W. E. HENLEY

The first paragraph of the following refers to contributions of R. L. S. to the *Magazine of Art* under Mr. Henley's editorship.

La Solitude, Hyères [*Autumn*, 1883]

DEAR LAD,—Glad you like *Fontainebleau*. I am going to be the means, under heaven, of aerating or literating your pages. The idea that because a thing is a picture-book all the writing should be on the wrong tack is *triste* but widespread. Thus *Hokusai* will be really a gossip on convention, or in great part. And the Skelt will be as like a Charles Lamb as I can get it. The writer should write, and not illustrate pictures: else it's bosh. . . .

Your remarks about the ugly are my eye. Ugliness is only the prose of horror. It is when you are not able to write *Macbeth* that you write *Thérèse Raquin.* Fashions are external: the essence of art only varies in so far as fashion widens the field of its application; art is a mill whose thirlage, in different ages, widens and contracts; but, in any case and under any fashion, the great man produces beauty, terror, and mirth, and the little man produces cleverness (personalities, psychology) instead of beauty, ugliness instead of terror, and jokes instead of mirth. As it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be ever, world without end. Amen!

And even as you read, you say, "Of course, *quelle rengaîne!*"

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

Manhattan mentioned below is the name of a short-lived New York magazine, the editor of which had asked through Mr. Low for a contribution from R. L. S.

La Solitude, Hyères, October [1883]

My dear Low,— . . . Some day or other, in *Cassell's Magazine of Art,* you will see a paper which will interest you, and where your name appears. It is called *Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Artists,* and the signature of R. L. Stevenson will be found annexed.

Please tell the editor of *Manhattan* the following secrets for me: 1*st,* That I am a beast; 2*nd,* that I owe him a letter; 3*rd,* that I have lost his, and cannot recall either his name or address; 4*th,* that I am very deep in engagements, which my absurd health makes it hard for me to overtake; but 5*th,* that I will bear him in mind, 6*th* and last, that I am a brute.

My address is still the same, and I live in a most sweet corner of the universe, sea and fine hills before me, and a rich variegated plain; and at my back a craggy hill, loaded with vast feudal ruins. I am very

quiet; a person passing by my door half startles me; but I enjoy the most aromatic airs, and at night the most wonderful view into a moonlit garden. By day this garden fades into nothing, overpowered by its surroundings and the luminous distance; but at night and when the moon is out, that garden, the arbour, the flight of stairs that mount the artificial hillock, the plumed blue gum-trees, that hang trembling, become the very skirts of Paradise. Angels I know frequent it; and it thrills all night with the flutes of silence. Damn that garden;—and by day it is gone.

Continue to testify boldly against realism. Down with Dagon, the fish god! All art swings down towards imitation, in these days, fatally. But the man who loves art with wisdom sees the joke; it is the lustful that tremble and respect her ladyship; but the honest and romantic lovers of the Muse can see a joke and sit down to laugh with Apollo.

The prospect of your return to Europe is very agreeable; and I was pleased by what you said about your parents. One of my oldest friends died recently, and this has given me new thoughts of death. Up to now I had rather thought of him as a mere personal enemy of my own; but now that I see him hunting after my friends, he looks altogether darker. My own father is not well; and Henley, of whom you must have heard me speak, is in a questionable state of health. These things are very solemn, and take some of the colour out of life. It is a great thing, after all, to be a man of reasonable honour and kindness. Do you remember once consulting me in Paris whether you had not better sacrifice honesty to art; and how, after much confabulation, we agreed that your art would suffer if you did? We decided better than we knew. In this strange welter where we live, all hangs together by a million filaments; and to do reasonably well by others, is the first pre-requisite of art. Art is a virtue; and if I were the man I should be, my art would rise in the proportion of my life.

If you were privileged to give some happiness to your parents, I know your art will gain by it. *By God it will!—Sic subscribitur,*

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères [*October* 1883]

My dear Bob,—Yes, I got both your letters at Lyons, but have been since then decading in several steps. Toothache; fever; Ferrier's death; lung. Now it is decided I am to leave to-morrow, penniless, for Nice to see Dr. Williams.

I was much struck by your last. I have written a breathless note on Realism for Henley; a fifth part of the subject hurriedly touched, which will show you how my thoughts are driving. You are now at last beginning to think upon the problems of executive, plastic art, for you are now for the first time attacking them. Hitherto you have spoken and thought of two things—technique and the *ars artium*, or common background of all arts. Studio work is the real touch. That is the genial error of the present French teaching. Realism I regard as a mere question of method. The "brown foreground," "old mastery," and the like, ranking with villanelles, as technical sports and pastimes. Real art, whether ideal or realistic, addresses precisely the same feeling, and seeks the same qualities—significance or charm. And the same—very same—inspiration is only methodically differentiated according as the artist is an arrant realist or an arrant idealist. Each, by his own method, seeks to save and perpetuate the same significance or charm; the one by suppressing, the other by forcing, detail. All other idealism is the brown foreground over again, and hence only art in the sense of a game, like cup and ball. All other realism is not art at all—but not at all. It is, then, an insincere and showy handicraft.

Were you to re-read some Balzac, as I have been

doing, it would greatly help to clear your eyes. He was a man who never found his method. An inarticulate Shakespeare, smothered under forcible-feeble detail. It is astounding to the riper mind how bad he is, how feeble, how untrue, how tedious; and, of course, when he surrendered to his temperament, how good and powerful. And yet never plain nor clear. He could not consent to be dull, and thus became so. He would leave nothing undeveloped, and thus drowned out of sight of land amid the multitude of crying and incongruous details. There is but one art—to omit! O if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge. A man who knew how to omit would make an *Iliad* of a daily paper.

Your definition of seeing is quite right. It is the first part of omission to be partly blind. Artistic sight is judicious blindness. Sam Bough must have been a jolly blind old boy. He would turn a corner, look for one-half or quarter minute, and then say, "This'll do, lad." Down he sat, there and then, with whole artistic plan, scheme of colour, and the like, and began by laying a foundation of powerful and seemingly incongruous colour on the block. He saw, not the scene, but the water-colour sketch. Every artist by sixty should so behold nature. Where does he learn that? In the studio, I swear. He goes to nature for facts, relations, values—material; as a man, before writing a historical novel, reads up memoirs. But it is not by reading memoirs that he has learned the selective criterion. He has learned that in the practice of his art; and he will never learn it well, but when disengaged from the ardent struggle of immediate representation, of realistic and *ex facto* art. He learns it in the crystallisation of day-dreams; in changing, not in copying, fact; in the pursuit of the ideal, not in the study of nature. These temples of art are, as you say, inaccessible to the realistic climber. It is not by looking at the sea that you get

"The multitudinous seas incarnadine,"

nor by looking at Mount Blanc that you find

"And visited all night by troops of stars."

A kind of ardour of the blood is the mother of all this; and according as this ardour is swayed by knowledge and seconded by craft, the art expression flows clear, and significance and charm, like a moon rising, are born above the barren juggle of mere symbols.

The painter must study more from nature than the man of words. But why? Because literature deals with men's business and passions which, in the game of life, we are irresistibly obliged to study; but painting with relations of light, and colour, and significances, and form, which, from the immemorial habit of the race, we pass over with an unregardful eye. Hence this crouching upon camp-stools, and these crusts.* But neither one nor other is a part of art, only preliminary studies.

I want you to help me to get people to understand that realism is a method, and only methodic in its consequences; when the realist is an artist, that is, and supposing the idealist with whom you compare him to be anything but a *farceur* and a *dilettante*. The two schools of working do, and should, lead to the choice of different subjects. But that is a consequence, not a cause. See my chaotic note, which will appear, I fancy, in November in Henley's sheet.

Poor Ferrier, it bust me horrid. He was, after you, the oldest of my friends.

I am now very tired, and will go to bed having prelected freely. Fanny will finish.

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Some pages of MS. exist in which the writer at this time attempted to re-cast and expand a portion of the *Lay Morals* of 1879. A letter written some days earlier to his father, and

* *Croûtes:* crude studies from nature.

partly quoted in Mr. Graham Balfour's *Life* (ed. 1906, p. 209), explains his purpose.

La Solitude, Hyères, 12th October, 1883

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just lunched; the day is exquisite, the air comes through the open window rich with odour, and I am by no means spiritually minded. Your letter, however, was very much valued, and has been read oftener than once. What you say about yourself I was glad to hear; a little decent resignation is not only becoming a Christian, but is likely to be excellent for the health of a Stevenson. To fret and fume is undignified, suicidally foolish, and theologically unpardonable; we are here not to make, but to tread predestined, pathways; we are the foam of a wave, and to preserve a proper equanimity is not merely the first part of submission to God, but the chief of possible kindnesses to those about us. I am lecturing myself, but you also. To do our best is one part, but to wash our hands smilingly of the consequence is the next part, of any sensible virtue.

I have come, for the moment, to a pause in my moral works; for I have many irons in the fire, and I wish to finish something to bring coin before I can afford to go on with what I think doubtfully to be a duty. It is a most difficult work; a touch of the parson will drive off those I hope to influence; a touch of overstrained laxity, besides disgusting, like a grimace, may do harm. Nothing that I have ever seen yet speaks directly and efficaciously to young men; and I do hope I may find the art and wisdom to fill up a gap. The great point, as I see it, is to ask as little as possible, and meet, if it may be, every view or absence of view; and it should be, must be, easy. Honesty is the one desideratum; but think how hard a one to meet. I think all the time of Ferrier and myself, these are the pair that I address. Poor Ferrier, so much a better man than I, and such a temporal wreck. But the thing of which we must divest our minds is to look partially upon others; all is to be viewed; and the creature

judged, as he must be by his Creator, not dissected through a prism of morals, but in the unrefracted ray. So seen, and in relation to the almost omnipotent surroundings, who is to distinguish between F. and such a man as Dr. Candish, or between such a man as David Hume and such an one as Robert Burns? To compare my poor and good Walter with myself is to make me startle; he, upon all grounds above the merely expedient, was the nobler being. Yet wrecked utterly ere the full age of manhood; and the last skirmishes so well fought, so humanly useless, so pathetically brave, only the leaps of an expiring lamp. All this is a very pointed instance. It shuts the mouth. I have learned more, in some ways, from him than from any other soul I ever met; and he, strange to think, was the best gentleman, in all kinder senses, that I ever knew.—Ever your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

The paper referred to at the beginning of the second paragraph is one on R. L. S. in the *Century Magazine*, the first seriously critical notice, says Mr. Low, which appeared of him in the States.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, Oct.* 23, 1883]

MY DEAR LOW,—*C'est d'un bon camarade;* and I am much obliged to you for your two letters and the inclosure. Times are a lityle changed with all of us since the ever memorable days of Lavenue: hallowed be his name! hallowed his old Fleury!—of which you did not see—I think—as I did—the glorious apotheosis: advanced on a Tuesday to three francs, on the Thursday to six, and on Friday swept off, holus-bolus, for the proprietor's private consumption. Well, we had the start of that proprietor. Many a good bottle came our way, and was, I think, worthily made welcome.

I am pleased that Mr. Gilder should like my literature; and I ask you particularly to thank Mr. Bunner

(have I the name right?) for his notice, which was of that friendly, headlong sort that really pleases an author like what the French call a "shake-hands." It pleased me the more coming from the States, where I have met not much recognition, save from the buccaneers, and above all from pirates who misspell my name. I saw my book advertised in a number of the *Critic* as the work of one R. L. Stephenson; and, I own, I boiled. It is so easy to know the name of the man whose book you have stolen; for there it is, at full length, on the title-page of your booty. But no, damn him, not he! He calls me Stephenson. These woes I only refer to by the way, as they set a higher value on the *Century* notice.

I am now a person with an established ill-health—a wife—a dog possessed with an evil, a Gadarene spirit—a chalet on a hill, looking out over the Mediterranean—a certain reputation—and very obscure finances. Otherwise, very much the same, I guess; and were a bottle of Fleury a thing to be obtained, capable of developing theories along with a fit spirit even as of yore. Yet I now draw near to the Middle Ages; nearly three years ago, that fatal Thirty struck; and yet the great work is not yet done—not yet even conceived. But so, as one goes on, the wood seems to thicken, the footpath to narrow, and the House Beautiful on the hill's summit to draw further and further away. We learn, indeed, to use our means; but only to learn, along with it, the paralysing knowledge that these means are only applicable to two or three poor commonplace motives. Eight years ago, if I could have slung ink as I can now, I should have thought myself well on the road after Shakespeare; and now—I find I have only got a pair of walking-shoes and not yet begun to travel. And art is still away there on the mountain summit. But I need not continue; for, of course, this is your story just as much as it is mine; and, strange to think, it was Shakespeare's too, and Beethoven's, and Phidias's. It is a blessed thing that,

in this forest of art, we can pursue our woodlice and sparrows, *and not catch them*, with almost the same fervour of exhilaration as that with which Sophocles hunted and brought down the Mastodon.

Tell me something of your work, and your wife.—My dear fellow, I am yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

My wife begs to be remembered to both of you; I cannot say as much for my dog, who has never seen you, but he would like, on general principles, to bite you.

To W. E. Henley

By this time *Treasure Island* was out in book form, and the following is in reply to some reflections on its seamanship which had been conveyed to him through Mr. Henley.

[*La Solitude, Hyères, November,* 1883]

My dear Lad,— . . . Of course, my seamanship is jimmy; did I not beseech you I know not how often to find me an ancient mariner—and you, whose own wife's own brother is one of the ancientest, did nothing for me? As for my seamen, did Runciman ever know eighteenth century Buccaneers? No? Well, no more did I. But I have known and sailed with seamen too, and lived and eaten with them; and I made my put-up shot in no great ignorance, but as a put-up thing has to be made, *i.e.*, to be coherent and picturesque, and damn the expense. Are they fairly lively on the wires? Then, favour me with your tongues. Are they wooden, and dim, and no sport? Then it is I that am silent, otherwise not. The work, strange as it may sound in the ear, is not a work of realism. The next thing I shall hear is that the etiquette is wrong in Otto's Court! With a warrant, and I mean it to be so, and the whole matter never cost me half a thought. I make these paper people to please myself, and Skelt, and God Almighty, and with no ulterior purpose. Yet am I mortal

myself; for, as I remind you, I begged for a supervising mariner. However, my heart is in the right place. I have been to sea, but I never crossed the threshold of a court; and the courts shall be the way I want 'em.

I'm glad to think I owe you the review that pleased me best of all the reviews I ever had; the one I liked best before that was ——'s on the *Arabians*. These two are the flowers of the collection, according to me. To live reading such reviews and die eating ortolans—sich is my aspiration.

Whenever you come you will be equally welcome. I am trying to finish *Otto* ere you shall arrive, so as to take and be able to enjoy a well-earned—O yes, a well-earned—holiday. Longman fetched by *Otto:* is it a spoon or a spoilt horn? Momentous, if the latter; if the former, a spoon to dip much praise and pudding, and to give, I do think, much pleasure. The last part, now in hand, much smiles upon me.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères [*November,* 1883]

My dear Mother,—You must not blame me too much for my silence; I am over head and ears in work, and do not know what to do first. I have been hard at *Otto,* hard at *Silverado* proofs, which I have worked over again to a tremendous extent; cutting, adding, re-writing, until some of the worst chapters of the original are now, to my mind, as good as any. I was the more bound to make it good, as I had such liberal terms; it's not for want of trying if I have failed.

I got your letter on my birthday; indeed, that was how I found it out about three in the afternoon, when postie comes. Thank you for all you said. As for my wife, that was the best investment ever made by man; but "in our branch of the family" we seem to marry well. I, considering my piles of work, am wonderfully

well; I have not been so busy for I know not how long. I hope you will send me the money I asked however, as I am not only penniless, but shall remain so in all human probability for some considerable time. I have got in the mass of my expectations; and the £100 which is to float us on the new year cannot come due till *Silverado* is all ready; I am delaying it myself for the moment; then will follow the binders and the travellers and an infinity of other nuisances; and only at the last, the jingling-tingling.

Do you know that *Treasure Island* has appeared? In the November number of Henley's *Magazine*, a capital number anyway, there is a funny publisher's puff of it for your book; also a bad article by me. Lang dotes on *Treasure Island:* "Except *Tom Sawyer* and the *Odyssey*," he writes, "I never liked any romance so much." I will inclose the letter though. The Bogue is angelic, although very dirty. It has rained—at last! It was jolly cold when the rain came.

I was overjoyed to hear such good news of my father. Let him go on at that!—Ever your affectionate,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Of the "small ships" here mentioned, *Fontainebleau* and *The Character of Dogs* are well known: *A Misadventure in France* is probably a draft of the *Epilogue to an Inland Voyage*, not published till five years later. *The Travelling Companion* (of which I remember little except that its scene was partly laid in North Italy and that a publisher to whom it was shown declared it a work of genius but indecent) was abandoned some two years later.

La Solitude, Hyères [*November*, 1883]

£10,000 Reward!

Whereas Sidney Colvin, more generally known as the Guardian Angel, has vanished from the gaze of Mr. R. L. Stevenson, the above reward is offered as a means to discover the whereabouts of the misguided gentle-

man. He was known as a man of irregular habits, and his rowdy exterior would readily attract attention in a crowd. He was never known to resist a drink; whisky was his favourite dish. If any one will bring him to Mr. Stevenson's back area door, dead or alive, the greatest rejoicing will be felt by a bereaved and uneasy family.

Also, wherefore not a word, dear Colvin? My news is: splendid health; great success of the *Black Arrow;* another tale demanded, readers this time (the Lord lighten them!) pleased; a great variety of small ships launched or still upon the stocks—(also, why not send the annotated proof of *Fontainebleau?* ce n'est pas d'un bon camarade); a paper on dogs for Carr *; a paper called *Old Mortality*, a paper called *A Misadventure in France*, a tale entituled *The Travelling Companion; Otto* arrested one foot in air; and last and not least, a great demand for news of Sidney Colvin and others. Herewith I pause, for why should I cast pearls before swine?

A word, Guardian Angel. You are much loved in this house, not by me only, but by the wife. The Wogg himself is anxious.—Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

I have said how from the date when Stevenson's life and destiny had come to be bound up for good and all with those of Mrs. Osbourne, whom he followed to California and brought back to England as his wife in 1879—I have said how from that date the lady became, of the pair, much the more frequent correspondent of his old friend and confidante, Mrs. Sitwell. But when he did take up the pen to write to her himself, it was in a tone always of quite unabated affection and confidence. The last such letter the reader has had before him was written from Davos in a mood of sickness and black depression; the following specimen from Hyères

* Mr. J. Comyns Carr, at this time editing the *English Illustrated Magazine*.

is in a contrasted mood of riotous high spirits and topsy-turvy nonsense such as in the actual presence and company of his friends was at all times, to their delight, apt to come upon him. Unluckily the first sheet is lost, and the letter begins in the middle:—

To Mrs. Sitwell

[*Hyères, Autumn,* 1883]

. . . . . .

Fanny out of sorts; self had a cold, but better, and only silly, as the above will amply demonstrate. I have wasted all my time fooling, and now must close this valuable epistle. There is nothing like a good correspondent: Absense is destroyed: Why, it's like living in the same house! All the details of your friend's life unroll before you like a panorama; you know his thoughts, his feelings, his minutest habits and surroundings. So, in this era of the postal union, we laugh at separation. But I fear I weary you with this extreme particularity, or I might go on to tell you . . . and that . . . and all about . . . which it would be too much to ask you to peruse. Let us then bring this document to a deserved conclusion, and may the Lord have mercy on its soul!

It is as impossible for me to be serious as for a Camel to go through the eye of a Commercial Traveller. Something gave way within me, like a trap falling, and ever since I have not ceased to laugh. Heaven grant I be not fey! Do you know what fey is? A certain causeless mirth and high spirit is supposed in Scotland to be the forerunner of destiny. The Greeks thought so too; and for aught I know, the Mesopotamians. Thus if you see anyone extremely happy, you may predict with certainty that his mood will not continue unchanged; and if you find him offensively melancholy, you had better look out for somebody else. Joy and grief are rarely permanent, or so philosophers affirm,

and I am too little of a scholar to controvert their doctrine. Let us, therefore, take them as they come; and when we are out of spirits be damned miserable, and when we are happy, be as foolish as we know how—Shakespeare. But I fear I digress. To continue: I remain,

Ever your affectionate friend,
R. L. McIdiot Stevenson of Bedlam.

To Sidney Colvin

La Solitude, Hyères [*November,* 1883]

My dear Colvin,—I have been bad, but as you were worse, I feel no shame. I raise a blooming countenance, not the evidence of a self-righteous spirit.

I continue my uphill fight with the twin spirits of bankruptcy and indigestion. Duns rage about my portal, at least to fancy's ear.

I suppose you heard of Ferrier's death: my oldest friend, except Bob. It has much upset me. I did not fancy how much. I am strangely concerned about it.

My house is the loveliest spot in the universe; the moonlight nights we have are incredible; love, poetry and music, and the *Arabian Nights,* inhabit just my corner of the world—nest there like mavises.

Here lies
The carcase
of
Robert Louis Stevenson
An active, austere, and not inelegant
writer,
who,
at the termination of a long career,
wealthy, wise, benevolent, and honoured by
the attention of two hemispheres,
yet owned it to have been his crowning favour
TO INHABIT
LA SOLITUDE.

(With the consent of the intelligent edility of Hyères, he has been interred, below this frugal stone, in the garden which he honoured for so long with his poetic presence.)

I must write more solemn letters. Adieu. Write.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Milne

This is to a cousin who had been one of his favourite playmates in childhood, and had recognised some allusions in the proof slips of the *Child's Garden* (the piece called "A Pirate Story").

La Solitude, Hyères [*November*, 1883]

My dear Henrietta,—Certainly; who else would they be? More by token, on that particular occasion, you were sailing under the title of Princess Royal; I, after a furious contest, under that of Prince Alfred; and Willie, still a little sulky, as the Prince of Wales. We were all in a buck basket about halfway between the swing and the gate; and I can still see the Pirate Squadron heave in sight upon the weather bow.

I wrote a piece besides on Giant Bunker; but I was not happily inspired, and it is condemned. Perhaps I'll try again; he was a horrid fellow, Giant Bunker! and some of my happiest hours were passed in pursuit of him. You were a capital fellow to play: how few there were who could! None better than yourself! I shall never forget some of the days at Bridge of Allan; they were one golden dream. See "A Good Boy" in the *Penny Whistles*, much of the sentiment of which is taken direct from one evening at B. of A. when we had had a great play with the little Glasgow girl. Hallowed be that fat book of fairy tales! Do you remember acting the Fair One with Golden Locks? What a romantic drama! Generally speaking, whenever I think of play, it is pretty certain that you will come into my head. I wrote a paper called *Child's Play* once, where, I believe, you or Willie would recognise things. . . .

Surely Willie is just the man to marry; and if his wife wasn't a happy woman, I think I could tell her who was to blame. Is there no word of it? Well, these things are beyond arrangement; and the wind bloweth where it listeth—which, I observe, is generally towards the west in Scotland. Here it prefers a south-easterly course, and is called the Mistral—usually with an adjective in front. But if you will remember my yesterday's toothache and this morning's crick, you will be in a position to choose an adjective for yourself. Not that the wind is unhealthy; only when it comes strong, it is both very high and very cold, which makes it the d-v-l. But as I am writing to a lady, I had better avoid this topic; winds requiring a great scope of language.

Please remember me to all at home; give Ramsay a pennyworth of acidulated drops for his good taste.—And believe me, your affectionate cousin,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Ferrier

La Solitude, Hyères [*November* 22, 1883]

DEAR MISS FERRIER,—Many thanks for the photograph. It is—well, it is like most photographs. The sun is an artist of too much renown; and, at any rate, we who knew Walter "in the brave days of old" will be difficult to please.

I was inexpressibly touched to get a letter from some lawyers as to some money. I have never had any account with my friends; some have gained and some lost; and I should feel there was something dishonest in a partial liquidation even if I could recollect the facts, *which I cannot.* But the fact of his having put aside this memorandum touched me greatly.

The mystery of his life is great. Our chemist in this place, who had been at Malvern, recognised the picture. You may remember Walter had a romantic affection for all pharmacies? and the bottles in the window

were for him a poem? He said once that he knew no pleasure like driving through a lamplit city, waiting for the chemists to go by.

All these things return now.

He had a pretty full translation of Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters,* which we read together, as well as the second part of *Faust,* in Gladstone Terrace, he helping me with the German. There is no keepsake I should more value than the MS. of that translation. They were the best days I ever had with him, little dreaming all would so soon be over. It needs a blow like this to convict a man of mortality and its burthen. I always thought I should go by myself; not to survive. But now I feel as if the earth were undermined, and all my friends have lost one thickness of reality since that one passed. Those are happy who can take it otherwise; with that I found things all beginning to dislimn. Here we have no abiding city, and one felt as though he had—and O too much acted.

But if you tell me, he did not feel my silence. However, he must have done so; and my guilt is irreparable now. I thank God at least heartily that he did not resent it.

Please remember me to Sir Alexander and Lady Grant, to whose care I will address this. When next I am in Edinburgh I will take flowers, alas! to the West Kirk. Many a long hour we passed in graveyards, the man who has gone and I—or rather not that man—but the beautiful, genial, witty youth who so betrayed him.—Dear Miss Ferrier, I am yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

This refers to some dispute which had arisen with an editor (I forget whom) concerning the refusal of an article on Salvini. "Fastidious Brisk" was a name coined by Mr. Henley for Stevenson—very inappropriately as I always thought.

La Solitude, Hyères, Autumn, 1883

My dear Lad.—You know your own business best; but I wish your honesty were not so warfaring. These conflicts pain Lucretian sitters on the shore; and one wonders—one wonders—wonders and whimpers. I do not say my attitude is noble; but is yours conciliatory? I revere Salvini, but I shall never see him—nor anybody—play again. That is all a matter of history, heroic history, to me. Were I in London, I should be the liker Tantalus—no more. But as for these quarrels: in not many years shall we not all be clay-cold and safe below ground, you with your loud-mouthed integrity, I with my fastidious briskness,—and—with all their faults and merits, swallowed in silence. It seems to me, in ignorance of cause, that when the dustman has gone by, these quarrellings will prick the conscience. Am I wrong? I am a great sinner; so, my brave friend, are you; the others also. Let us a little imitate the divine patience and the divine sense of humour, and smilingly tolerate those faults and virtues that have so brief a period and so intertwined a being.

I fear I was born a parson; but I live very near upon the margin (though, by your leave, I may outlive you all!), and too much rigour in these daily things sounds to me like clatter on the kitchen dishes. If it might be—could it not be smoothed? This very day my father writes me he has gone to see, upon his deathbed, an old friend to whom for years he has not spoken or written. On his deathbed; no picking up of the lost stitches; merely to say: my little fury, my spotted uprightness, after having split our lives, have not a word of quarrel to say more. And the same post brings me the news of another—War! Things in this troubled medium are not so clear, dear Henley; there are faults upon all hands; and the end comes, and Ferrier's grave gapes for us all.

The Prosy Preacher.

(But written in deep dejection, my dear man)

Suppose they *are* wrong? Well, am I not tolerated, are you not tolerated?—we and *our* faults?

To W. H. Low

La Solitude, Hyères, Var, 13th December, 1883

My dear Low,— . . . I was much pleased with what you said about my work. Ill-health is a great handicapper in the race. I have never at command that press of spirits that are necessary to strike out a thing red-hot. *Silverado* is an example of stuff worried and pawed about, God knows how often, in poor health, and you can see for yourself the result: good pages, an imperfect fusion, a certain languor of the whole. Not, in short, art. I have told Roberts to send you a copy of the book when it appears, where there are some fair passages that will be new to you. My brief romance, *Prince Otto*—far my most difficult adventure up to now—is near an end. I have still one chapter to write *de fond en comble*, and three or four to strengthen or recast. The rest is done. I do not know if I have made a spoon, or only spoiled a horn; but I am tempted to hope the first. If the present bargain hold, it will not see the light of day for some thirteen months. Then I shall be glad to know how it strikes you. There is a good deal of stuff in it, both dramatic and, I think, poetic; and the story is not like these purposeless fables of to-day, but is, at least, intended to stand firm upon a base of philosophy—or morals—as you please. It has been long gestated, and is wrought with care. *Enfin, nous verrons.* My labours have this year for the first time been rewarded with upwards of £350; that of itself, so base we are! encourages me; and the better tenor of my health yet more.—Remember me to Mrs. Low, and believe me, yours most sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Dec., 1883

My dear Mother,—We have been in a terrible quandary as to Lloyd's Christmas present; and I have finally thought that nothing could be better or more useful than the 1st vol. of *Chambers' Cyclopedia:* the present may thus be resumed and continued "in our next" on subsequent solemnities. Please, saying nothing to him beforehand, let him have it on the Xmas morning from his mother and me.

Tell Uncle George that, warned by confounded experience, I had the iodide reduced to one half in his prescription; and even that has poisoned me. Can the iodide not be changed or left out? My friend, the chemist, please tell him, was in ecstasies over his prescription—"tasted it," in the old phrase, like a poem—and vowed it was a pleasure to make up.

You know, I once nearly died of a single dose of iodide of potassium, and my sufferings on that occasion I shall never forget.

Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, December 20, 1883

My dear Father,—I do not know which of us is to blame; I suspect it is you this time. The last accounts of you were pretty good, I was pleased to see; I am, on the whole, very well—suffering a little still from my fever and liver complications, but better.

I have just finished re-reading a book, which I counsel you above all things *not* to read, as it has made me very ill, and would make you worse—Lockhart's *Scott.* It is worth reading, as all things are from time to time that keep us nose to nose with fact; though I think such reading may be abused, and that a great deal of life is

better spent in reading of a light and yet chivalrous strain. Thus, no Waverley novel approaches in power, blackness, bitterness, and moral elevation to the diary and Lockhart's narrative of the end; and yet the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the Life. You may take a tonic daily, but not phlebotomy.

The great double danger of taking life too easily, and taking it too hard, how difficult it is to balance that! But we are all too little inclined to faith; we are all, in our serious moments, too much inclined to forget that all are sinners, and fall justly by their faults, and therefore that we have no more to do with that than with the thunder-cloud; only to trust, and do our best, and wear as smiling a face as may be for others and ourselves. But there is no royal road among this complicated business. Hegel the German got the best word of all philosophy with his antinomies: the contrary of everything is its postulate. That is, of course, grossly expressed, but gives a hint of the idea, which contains a great deal of the mysteries of religion, and a vast amount of the practical wisdom of life. For your part, there is no doubt as to your duty—to take things easy and be as happy as you can, for your sake, and my mother's, and that of many besides. Excuse this sermon.—Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, December 25, 1883

My dear Father and Mother,—This it is supposed will reach you about Christmas, and I believe I should include Lloyd in the greeting. But I want to lecture my father; he is not grateful enough; he is like Fanny; his resignation is not the "true blue." A man who has gained a stone; whose son is better, and, after so many fears to the contrary, I dare to say, a credit to him; whose business is arranged; whose marriage is a pic-

ture—what I should call resignation in such a case as his would be to "take down his fiddle and play as lood as ever he could." That and nought else. And now, you dear old pious ingrate, on this Christmas morning, think what your mercies have been; and do not walk too far before your breakfast—as far as to the top of India Street, then to the top of Dundas Street, and then to your ain stair heid; and do not forget that even as *laborare, so joculari, est orare;* and to be happy the first step to being pious.

I have as good as finished my novel, and a hard job it has been—but now practically over, *laus deo!* My financial prospects better than ever before; my excellent wife a touch dolorous, like Mr. Tommy; my Bogue quite converted, and myself in good spirits. O, send Curry Powder per Baxter.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*La Solitude, Hyères*] *last Sunday of* '83

My dear Mother,—I give my father up. I give him a parable: that the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the tragic Life. And he takes it backside foremost, and shakes his head, and is gloomier than ever. Tell him that I give him up. I don't want no such a parent. This is not the man for my money. I do not call that by the name of religion which fills a man with bile. I write him a whole letter, bidding him beware of extremes, and telling him that his gloom is gallows-worthy; and I get back an answer—Perish the thought of it.

Here am I on the threshold of another year, when, according to all human foresight, I should long ago have been resolved into my elements; here am I, who you were persuaded was born to disgrace you—and, I will do you the justice to add, on no such insufficient grounds—no very burning discredit when all is done; here am I

married, and the marriage recognised to be a blessing of the first order, A1 at Lloyd's. There is he, at his not first youth, able to take more exercise than I at thirty-three, and gaining a stone's weight, a thing of which I am incapable. There are you; has the man no gratitude? There is Smeoroch *: is he blind? Tell him from me that all this is

NOT THE TRUE BLUE!

I will think more of his prayers when I see in him a spirit of *praise*. Piety is a more childlike and happy attitude than he admits. Martha, Martha, do you hear the knocking at the door? But Mary was happy. Even the Shorter Catechism, not the merriest epitome of religion, and a work exactly as pious although not quite so true as the multiplication table—even that dry-as-dust epitome begins with a heroic note. What is man's chief end? Let him study that; and ask himself if to refuse to enjoy God's kindest gifts is in the spirit indicated. Up, Dullard! It is better service to enjoy a novel than to mump.

I have been most unjust to the Shorter Catechism, I perceive. I wish to say that I keenly admire its merits as a performance; and that all that was in my mind was its peculiarly unreligious and unmoral texture; from which defect it can never, of course, exercise the least influence on the minds of children. But they learn fine style and some austere thinking unconsciously.—Ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

To David A. Stevenson, C.E.

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, Dec. 31st, 1883

My dear Davie,—At the beginning of the end of this year, I had many thoughts of the past, many of your-

* A favourite Skye terrier. Mr. Stevenson was a great lover of dogs.

self, and many of your mother, who was the idol of my childhood. I had it in my mind to write to Uncle David, but I thought it might be merely an importunate intrusion, and decided to write rather to yourself.

The way in which life separates people is very painful. It is nearly a year since we had a New Year's walk; but I have not forgotten the past, and your mother I shall never forget. I am profoundly a Stevenson in the matter of not giving presents. Once only that I can remember did I, of my own notion, give a present: and that was before '57, when I "asked leave" to give a present to Aunt Elizabeth. I do not suppose that a greater testimony could be given to her extraordinary charm and kindness. I never saw anybody like her: a look from Aunt Elizabeth was like sunshine.

Please excuse this very blundering scrawl; understand what is unsaid; and accept, for yourself and all the family, my most sincere good wishes,

Your affectionate cousin,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, January 1, [1884]

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—A Good New Year to you. The year closes, leaving me with £50 in the bank, owing no man nothing, £100 more due to me in a week or so, and £150 more in the course of the month; and I can look back on a total receipt of £465, 0s. 6d. for the last twelve months!

And yet I am not happy!

Yet I beg! Here is my beggary:—

1. Sellar's Trial.
2. George Borrow's Book about Wales.
3. My Grandfather's Trip to Holland.
4. And (but this is, I fear, impossible) the Bell Rock Book.

When a think of how last year began, after four months of sickness and idleness, all my plans gone to water, myself starting alone, a kind of spectre, for Nice—should I not be grateful? Come, let us sing unto the Lord!

Nor should I forget the expected visit, but I will not believe in that till it befalls; I am no cultivator of disappointments, 'tis a herb that does not grow in my garden; but I get some good crops both of remorse and gratitude. The last I can recommend to all gardeners; it grows best in shiny weather, but once well grown, is very hardy; it does not require much labour; only that the husbandman should smoke his pipe about the flowerplots and admire God's pleasant wonders. Winter green (otherwise known as Resignation, or the "false gratitude plant") springs in much the same soil; is little hardier, if at all; and requires to be so dug about and dunged, that there is little margin left for profit. The variety known as the Black Winter green (H. V. Stevensoniana) is rather for ornament than profit.

"John, do you see that bed of resignation?"—"It's doin' bravely, sir."—"John, I will not have it in my garden; it flatters not the eye and comforts not the stomach; root it out."—"Sir, I ha'e seen o' them that rase as high as nettles; gran' plants!"—"What then? Were they as tall as alps, if still unsavoury and bleak, what matters it? Out with it, then; and in its place put Laughter and a Good Conceit (that capital home evergreen), and a bush of Flowering Piety—but see it be the flowering sort—the other species is no ornament to any gentleman's Back Garden."

JNO. BUNYAN.

To W. E. HENLEY

Early in January, Stevenson, after a week's visit at Hyères from his friends Charles Baxter and W. E. Henley, accompanied them as far as Nice, and there suddenly went down with an attack of acute congestion, first of the lungs and then of the

kidneys. At one moment there seemed no hope, but he recovered slowly and returned to Hyères. His friends had not written during his illness, fearing him to be too far gone to care for letters. As he got better he began to chafe at their silence.

[*Hyères, February* or *March,* 1884]

TANDEM DESINO

I CANNOT read, work, sleep, lie still, walk, or even play patience. These plagues will overtake all damned silencists, among whom, from this day out, number

the fiery indignator
Roland Little Stevenson.

Eructavit cor Timonis.

I counted miseries by the heap,
But now have had my fill,
I cannot see, I do not sleep,
But shortly I shall kill.

Of many letters, here is a
Full End.
The last will and testament of
a demitting correspondent.

My indefatigable pen
I here lay down forever. Men
Have used, and left me, and forgot;
Men are entirely off the spot;
Men are a *blague* and an abuse;
And I commit them to the deuce!

RODERICK LAMOND STEVENSON.

I had companions, I had friends,
I had of whisky various blends.
The whisky was all drunk; and lo!
The friends were gone for evermo!

The loquacious man at peace.

And when I marked the ingratitude,
I to my maker turned, and spewed.

RANDOLPH LOVEL STEVENSON.

A pen broken, a subverted ink-pot.

Here endeth the familiar Correspondence of R. L. S. Terminus; Silentia.

All men are rot; but there are two—
Sidney, the oblivious Slade, and you—
Who from that rabble stand confest
Ten million times the rottenest.

R. L. S.

When I was sick and safe in gaol
I thought my friends would never fail.
One wrote me nothing; t'other bard
Sent me an insolent post-card.

R. L. S.

Explicuerunt. Epistolae Stevensonianae Omnes.

IF NOBODY WRITES TO ME I SHALL DIE

I now write no more.

RICHARD LEFANU STEVENSON,
Duke of Indignation

Mark Tacebo, Secretary

Isaac Blood
John Blind
Vain-hope Go-to-bed
Israel Sciatica
} witnesses.

FINIS Finaliter finium.

The finger on the mouth.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The allusions in the second paragraph are to the commanders in the Nile campaigns of those years.

La Solitude, Hyères, 9th March, 1884

MY DEAR S. C.,—You will already have received a not very sane note from me; so your patience was rewarded—may I say, your patient silence? However, now comes a letter, which on receipt, I thus acknowledge.

I have already expressed myself as to the political aspect. About Grahame, I feel happier; it does seem to have been really a good, neat honest piece of work. We do not seem to be so badly off for commanders: Wolseley and Roberts, and this pile of Woods, Stewarts, Alisons, Grahames, and the like. Had we but ONE statesman on any side of the house!

Two chapters of *Otto* do remain: one to rewrite, one to create; and I am not yet able to tackle them. For me it is my chief o' works; hence probably not so for others, since it only means that I have here attacked the greatest difficulties. But some chapters towards the end: three in particular—I do think come off. I find them stirring, dramatic, and not unpoetical. We shall see, however; as like as not, the effort will be more obvious than the success. For, of course, I strung myself hard to carry it out. The next will come easier, and possibly be more popular. I believe in the covering of much paper, each time with a definite and not too difficult artistic purpose; and then, from time to time, drawing oneself up and trying, in a superior effort, to combine the facilities thus acquired or improved. Thus one progresses. But, mind, it is very likely that the big effort, instead of being the masterpiece, may be the blotted copy, the gymnastic exercise. This no man can tell; only the brutal and licentious public, snouting in Mudie's wash trough, can return a dubious answer.

I am to-day, thanks to a pure heaven and a beneficent, loud-making, antiseptic mistral, on the high places as to health and spirits. Money holds out wonderfully. Fanny has gone for a drive to certain meadows which are now one sheet of jonquils: sea-bound meadows, the thought of which may freshen you in Bloomsbury. "Ye have been fresh and fair, Ye have been filled with flowers"—I fear I misquote. Why do people babble? Surely Herrick, in his true vein, is superior to Martial himself, though Martial is a very pretty poet.

Did you ever read St. Augustine? The first chapters

of the *Confessions* are marked by a commanding genius: Shapespearean in depth. I was struck dumb, but, alas! when you begin to wander into controversy, the poet drops out. His description of infancy is most seizing. And how is this: "Sed majorum nugae negotia vocantur; puerorum autem talia cum sint puniuntur a majoribus." Which is quite after the heart of R. L. S. See also his splendid passage about the "luminosus limes amicitiae" and the "nebulae de limosa concupiscentia carnis"; going on "*Utrumque* in confuso aestuabat et rapiebat imbecillam aetatem per abrupta cupiditatum." That "Utrumque" is a real contribution to life's science. Lust *alone* is but a pigmy; but it never, or rarely, attacks us single-handed.

Do you ever read (to go miles off, indeed) the incredible Barbey d'Aurévilly? A psychological Poe—to be for a moment Henley. I own with pleasure I prefer him with all his folly, rot, sentiment, and mixed metaphors, to the whole modern school in France. It makes me laugh when it's nonsense; and when he gets an effect (though it's still nonsense and mere Poëry, not poesy) it wakens me. *Ce qui ne meurt pas* nearly killed me with laughing, and left me—well, it left me very nearly admiring the old ass. At least, it's the kind of thing one feels one couldn't do. The dreadful moonlight, when they all three sit silent in the room—by George, sir, it's imagined—and the brief scene between the husband and wife is all there. *Quant au fond*, the whole thing, of course, is a fever dream, and worthy of eternal laughter. Had the young man broken stones, and the two women been hard-working honest prostitutes, there had been an end of the whole immoral and baseless business: you could at least have respected them in that case.

I also read *Petronius Arbiter*, which is a rum book, not so immoral as most modern works, but singularly silly. I tackled some Tacitus too. I got them with a dreadful French crib on the same page with the text, which helps me along and drives me mad. The French do not even try to translate. They try to be much

more classical than the classics, with astounding results of barrenness and tedium. Tacitus, I fear, was too solid for me. I liked the war part; but the dreary intriguing at Rome was too much.

R. L. S.

To Mr. Dick

This correspondent was for many years head clerk and confidential assistant in the family firm at Edinburgh.

La Solitude, Hyères, Var, 12th March, 1884

My dear Mr. Dick,—I have been a great while owing you a letter; but I am not without excuses as you may have heard. I overworked to get a piece of work finished before I had my holiday, thinking to enjoy it more; and instead of that, the machinery near hand came sundry in my hands! like Murdie's uniform. However, I am now, I think, in a fair way of recovery: I think I was made, what there is of me, of whipcord and thorn-switches; surely I am tough! But I fancy I shall not overdrive again, or not so long. It is my theory that work is highly beneficial; but that it should, if possible, and certainly for such partially broken down instruments as the thing I call my body, be taken in batches, with a clear break and breathing space between. I always do vary my work, laying one thing aside to take up another, not merely because I believe it rests the brain, but because I have found it most beneficial to the result. Reading, Bacon says, makes a full man; but what makes me full on any subject is to banish it for a time from all my thoughts. —However, what I now propose, is, out of every quarter, to work two months and rest the third. I believe I shall get more done, as I generally manage, on my present scheme, to have four months' impotent illness, and two of imperfect health, one before, one after, I break down. This, at least, is not an economical division of the year.

I have been pleased lately to get very cheerful letters

from my father. This seems a good sign. I trust, for everyone's sake, he may stand his London business well. I re-read the other day that heart-breaking book the life of Scott; and reading it with one eye on poor Uncle David and the other, in a kind of fear, upon my father, the pity of these last sicknesses came very sharply home to me. One should read such books now and then—but O, not often. As I live, I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave-spirited, even if it cannot be made beautiful and pious and heroic. We wish it to be a green place. The Waverley novels are better to re-read than the over-true life, fine as dear Sir Walter was. The Bible, in most parts, is a cheerful book; it is our little piping theologies, tracts, and sermons that are dull and dowie; and even the Shorter Catechism, which is scarcely a work of consolation, opens with the best and shortest and completest sermon ever written: upon Man's Chief End.

This is not a very pertinent rigmarole; but the pen goeth as it listeth. How goes the lesser David? Remember me to him most kindly, and some day, let me know how it goes with both of you—and with my father in business. I wonder whether I was most afraid of the lesser David, or he of me. But let me tell you the first appearance of an amanuensis enables a person to enter into the sentiments of Michael Scott when he was cornered by the Deil.

Believe me,
my dear Mr. Dick,
very sincerely yours,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—You see I have changed my hand. I was threatened apparently with scrivener's cramp, and at any rate had got to write so small that the revisal of my MS. tried my eyes; hence my signature alone remains upon the old model! for it appears if I changed that, I should be cut off from my "vivers."

R. L. S.

To Cosmo Monkhouse

This amiable and excellent public servant, art-critic, and verse-writer was a friend of old Savile Club days; the drift of his letter can easily be guessed from this reply. The reference to Lamb is to the essay on the Restoration dramatists.

La Solitude, Hyères, March 16, 1884

My dear Monkhouse,—You see with what promptitude I plunged into correspondence; but the truth is, I am condemned to a complete inaction, stagnate dismally, and love a letter. Yours, which would have been welcome at any time, was thus doubly precious.

Dover sounds somewhat shiveringly in my ears. You should see the weather *I* have—cloudless, clear as crystal, with just a punkah-draft of the most aromatic air, all pine and gum tree. You would be ashamed of Dover; you would scruple to refer, sir, to a spot so paltry. To be idle at Dover is a strange pretension; pray, how do you warm yourself? If I were there I should grind knives or write blank verse, or—— But at least you do not bathe? It is idle to deny it: I have—I may say I nourish—a growing jealousy of the robust, large-legged, healthy Britain-dwellers patient of grog, scorners of the timid umbrella, innocuously breathing fog: all which I once was, and I am ashamed to say liked it. How ignorant is youth! grossly rolling among unselected pleasures; and how nobler, purer, sweeter, and lighter, to sip the choice tonic, to recline in the luxurious invalid chair, and to tread, well-shawled, the little round of the constitutional. Seriously, do you like to repose? Ye Gods, I hate it. I never rest with any acceptation; I do not know what people mean who say they like sleep and that damned bedtime which, since long ere I was breeched, has rung a knell to all my day's doings and beings. And when a man, seemingly sane, tells me he has "fallen in love with stagnation," I can only say to him, "You will never be a Pirate!" This may not cause any regret to Mrs. Monk-

house; but in your own soul it will clang hollow—think of it! Never! After all boyhood's aspirations and youth's immoral day-dreams, you are condemned to sit down, grossly draw in your chair to the fat board, and be a beastly Burgess till you die. Can it be? Is there not some escape, some furlough from the Moral Law, some holiday jaunt contrivable into a Better Land? Shall we never shed blood? This prospect is too grey.

> Here lies a man who never did
> Anything but what he was bid;
> Who lived his life in paltry ease,
> And died of commonplace disease.

To confess plainly, I had intended to spend my life (or any leisure I might have from Piracy upon the high seas) as the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry, devastating whole valleys. I can still, looking back, see myself in many favourite attitudes; signalling for a boat from my pirate ship with a pocket-handkerchief, I at the jetty end, and one or two of my bold blades keeping the crowd at bay; or else turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand-gallop up the road out of the burning valley: this last by moonlight.

Et point du tout. I am a poor scribe, and have scarce broken a commandment to mention, and have recently dined upon cold veal! As for you (who probably had some ambitions), I hear of you living at Dover, in lodgings, like the beasts of the field. But in heaven, when we get there, we shall have a good time, and see some real carnage. For heaven is—must be—that great Kingdom of Antinomia, which Lamb saw dimly adumbrated in the *Country Wife*, where the worm which never dies (the conscience) peacefully expires, and the sinner lies down beside the Ten Commandments. Till then, here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling, with neither health nor vice for anything more spirited than procrastination, which I may well call the Consolation

Stakes of Wickedness; and by whose diligent practice, without the least amusement to ourselves, we can rob the orphan and bring down grey hairs with sorrow to the dust.

This astonishing gush of nonsense I now hasten to close, envelope, and expedite to Shakespeare's Cliff. Remember me to Shakespeare, and believe me, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To EDMUND GOSSE

Mr. Gosse had written describing the office which he then occupied, a picturesque old-fashioned chamber in the upper stories of the Board of Trade.

La Solitude, Hyères, March 17, 1884

MY DEAR GOSSE,—Your office—office is profanely said—your bower upon the leads is divine. Have you, like Pepys, "the right to fiddle" there? I see you mount the companion, barbiton in hand, and, fluttered about by city sparrows, pour forth your spirit in a voluntary. Now when the spring begins, you must lay in your flowers: how do you say about a potted hawthorn? Would it bloom? Wallflower is a choice pot-herb; lily-of-the-valley, too, and carnation, and Indian cress trailed about the window, is not only beautiful by colour, but the leaves are good to eat. I recommend thyme and rosemary for the aroma, which should not be left upon one side; they are good quiet growths.

On one of your tables keep a great map spread out; a chart is still better—it takes one further—the havens with their little anchors, the rocks, banks, and soundings, are adorably marine; and such furniture will suit your ship-shape habitation. I wish I could see those cabins; they smile upon me with the most intimate charm. From your leads, do you behold St. Paul's? I always like to see the Foolscap; it is London *per se* and no spot from which it is visible is without romance.

Then it is good company for the man of letters, whose veritable nursing Pater-Noster is so near at hand.

I am all at a standstill; as idle as a painted ship, but not so pretty. My romance, which has so nearly butchered me in the writing, not even finished; though so near, thank God, that a few days of tolerable strength will see the roof upon that structure. I have worked very hard at it, and so do not expect any great public favour. *In moments of effort, one learns to do the easy things that people like.* There is the golden maxim; thus one should strain and then play, strain again and play again. The strain is for us, it educates; the play is for the reader, and pleases. Do you not feel so? We are ever threatened by two contrary faults: both deadly. To sink into what my forefathers would have called "rank conformity," and to pour forth cheap replicas, upon the one hand; upon the other, and still more insidiously present, to forget that art is a diversion and a decoration, that no triumph or effort is of value, nor anything worth reaching except charm. —Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Ferrier

Soon after the date of the following letter Miss Ferrier went out to her friends and stayed with them through the trying weeks which followed.

La Solitude, Hyères [*March* 22, 1884]

My dear Miss Ferrier,—Are you really going to fail us? This seems a dreadful thing. My poor wife, who is not well off for friends on this bare coast, has been promising herself, and I have been promising her, a rare acquisition. And now Miss Burn has failed, and you utter a very doubtful note. You do not know how delightful this place is, nor how anxious we are for a visit. Look at the names: "The Solitude"—is that romantic? The palm-trees? how is that for the gorgeous East? "Var"? the name of a river—"the quiet waters

by"! 'Tis true, they are in another department, and consist of stones and a biennial spate; but what a music, what a plash of brooks, for the imagination! We have hills; we have skies; the roses are putting forth, as yet sparsely; the meadows by the sea are one sheet of jonquils; the birds sing as in an English May—for, considering we are in France and serve up our song-birds, I am ashamed to say, on a little field of toast and with a sprig of thyme (my own receipt) in their most innocent and now unvocal bellies—considering all this, we have a wonderful fair wood-music round this Solitude of ours. What can I say more?—All this awaits you. *Kennst du das Land,* in short.—Your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

The verses enclosed were the set entitled "The Canoe Speaks," afterwards printed in *Underwoods.* Stevenson was suffering at this time from a temporary weakness of the eyesight.

La Solitude, Hyères [*April,* 1884]

MY DEAR LOW,—The blind man in these sprawled lines sends greeting. I have been ill, as perhaps the papers told you. The news—"great news—glorious news—sec-ond ed-ition!"—went the round in England.

Anyway, I now thank you for your pictures, which, particularly the Arcadian one, we all (Bob included, he was here sick-nursing me) much liked.

Herewith are a set of verses which I thought pretty enough to send to press. Then I thought of the *Manhattan,* towards whom I have guilty and compunctious feelings. Last, I had the best thought of all—to send them to you in case you might think them suitable for illustration. It seemed to me quite in your vein. If so, good; if not, hand them on to *Manhattan, Century,* or *Lippincott,* at your pleasure, as all three desire my work or pretend to. But I trust the lines will not go unat-

tended. Some riverside will haunt you; and O! be tender to my bathing girls. The lines are copied in my wife's hand, as I cannot see to write otherwise than with the pen of Cormoran, Gargantua, or Nimrod. Love to your wife.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

Copied it myself.

To Thomas Stevenson

La Solitude, Hyères, April 19, 1884

My dear Father,—Yesterday I very powerfully stated the *Hæresis Stevensoniana*, or the complete body of divinity of the family theologian, to Miss Ferrier. She was much impressed; so was I. You are a great heresiarch; and I know no better. Whaur the devil did ye get thon about the soap? Is it altogether your own? I never heard it elsewhere; and yet I suspect it must have been held at some time or other, and if you were to look up you would probably find yourself condemned by some Council.

I am glad to hear you are so well. The hear is excellent. The *Cornhills* came; I made Miss Ferrier read us *Thrawn Janet*, and was quite bowled over by my own works. *The Merry Men* I mean to make much longer, with a whole new dénouement, not yet quite clear to me. *The Story of a Lie* I must re-write entirely also, as it is too weak and ragged, yet is worth saving for the Admiral. Did I ever tell you that the Admiral was recognised in America?

When they are all on their legs this will make an excellent collection.

Has Davie never read *Guy Mannering, Rob Roy,* or *The Antiquary?* All of which are worth three *Waverleys.* I think *Kenilworth* better than *Waverley; Nigel,* too; and *Quentin Durward* about as good. But it shows a true piece of insight to prefer *Waverley,* for it *is* different; and though not quite coherent, better

worked in parts than almost any other: surely more carefully. It is undeniable that the love of the slap-dash and the shoddy grew upon Scott with success. Perhaps it does on many of us, which may be the granite on which D.'s opinion stands. However, I hold it, in Patrick Walker's phrase, for an "old, condemned, damnable error." Dr. Simson was condemned by P. W. as being "a bagful of" such. One of Patrick's amenities!

Another ground there may be to D.'s opinion; those who avoid (or seek to avoid) Scott's facility are apt to be continually straining and torturing their style to get in more of life. And to many the extra significance does not redeem the strain.

DOCTOR STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

La Solitude, Hyères, April 20th, 1884

I HAVE been really ill for two days, hemorrhage, weakness, extreme nervousness that will not let me lie a moment, and damned sciatica o' nights; but to-day I am on the recovery. Time; for I was miserable. It is not often that I suffer, with all my turns and tumbles, from the sense of serious illness; and I hate it, as I believe everybody does. And then the combination of not being able to read, not being allowed to speak, being too weak to write, and not wishing to eat, leaves a man with some empty seconds. But I bless God, it's over now; to-day I am much mended.

Insatiable gulf, greedier than hell, and more silent than the woods of Styx, have you or have you not lost the dedication to the *Child's Garden?* Answer that plain question, as otherwise I must try to tackle to it once again.

Sciatica is a word employed much by Shakespeare in a certain connection. 'Tis true, he was no physician, but as I read, he had smarted in his day. I, too, do

smart. And yet this keen soprano agony, these veins of fire and bomb-shell explosions in the knee, are as nothing to a certain dull, drowsy pain I had when my kidneys were congested at Nice; there was death in that; the creak of Charon's rowlocks, and the miasmas of the Styx. I may say plainly, much as I have lost the power of bearing pain, I had still rather suffer much than die. Not only the love of life grows on me, but the fear of certain odd end-seconds grows as well. 'Tis a suffocating business, take it how you will; and Tyrrel and Forest only bunglers.

Well, this is an essay on death, or worse, on dying: to return to daylight and the winds, I perceive I have grown to live too much in my work and too little in life. 'Tis the dollars do it: the world is too much. Whenever I think I would like to live a little, I hear the butcher's cart resounding through the neighbourhood; and so to plunge again. The fault is a good fault for me; to be able to do so, is to succeed in life; and my life has been a huge success. I can live with joy and without disgust in the art by which I try to support myself; I have the best wife in the world; I have rather more praise and nearly as much coin as I deserve; my friends are many and true-hearted. Sir, it is a big thing in successes. And if mine anchorage lies something open to the wind, Sciatica, if the crew are blind, and the captain spits blood, one cannot have all, and I may be patched up again, who knows? "His timbers yet are (indifferently) sound, and he may float again."

Thanks for the word on *Silverado*.—Yours ever,

THE SCIATICATED BARD.

TO TREVOR HADDON

The allusions to Skelt, the last of the designers and etchers of cheap sheets illustrating the popular dramas and melodramas of the day, will need no explanation to readers familiar with the essay, *A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured*.

La Solitude, Hyères, April 23rd, 1884

DEAR MR. HADDON,—I am pleased to see your hand again, and, waiting my wife's return, to guess at some of the contents. For various things have befallen me of late. First, as you see, I had to change my hand; lastly I have fallen into a kind of blindness, and cannot read. This more inclines me for something to do, to answer your letter before I have read it, a safe plan familiar to diplomatists.

I gather from half shut eyes that you were a Skeltist; now seriously that is a good beginning; there is a deal of romance (cheap) in Skelt. Look at it well, and you will see much of Dickens. And even Skelt is better than conscientious, grey back-gardens, and conscientious, dull still lives. The great lack of art just now is a spice of life and interest; and I prefer galvanism to acquiescence in the grave. All do not; 'tis an affair of tastes; and mine are young. Those who like death have their innings to-day with art that is like mahogany and horsehair furniture, solid, true, serious and as dead as Cæsar. I wish I could read *Treasure Island;* I believe I should like it. But work done, for the artist, is the Golden Goose killed; you sell its feathers and lament the eggs. To-morrow the fresh woods!

I have been seriously ill, and do not pick up with that finality that I should like to see. I linger over and digest my convalescence like a favourite wine; and what with blindness, green spectacles, and seclusion, cut but a poor figure in the world.

I made out at the end that you were asking some advice—but what, my failing eyes refuse to inform me. I must keep a sheet for the answer; and Mrs. Stevenson still delays, and still I have no resource against tedium but the waggling of this pen.

You seem to me to be a pretty lucky young man; keep your eyes open to your mercies. That part of piety is eternal; and the man who forgets to be grateful has fallen asleep in life. Please to recognise that you are unworthy of all that befalls you—unworthy, too,

I hear you wail, of this terrible sermon; but indeed we are not worthy of our fortunes; love takes us in a counterfeit, success comes to us at play, health stays with us while we abuse her; and even when we gird at our fellow-men, we should remember that it is of their good will alone, that we still live and still have claims to honour. The sins of the most innocent, if they were exactly visited, would ruin them to the doer. And if you know any man who believes himself to be worthy of a wife's love, a friend's affection, a mistress's caress, even if venal, you may rest assured he is worthy of nothing but a kicking. I fear men who have no open faults; what do they conceal? We are not meant to be good in this world, but to try to be, and fail, and keep on trying; and when we get a cake to say, "Thank God!" and when we get a buffet, to say, "Just so: well hit!"

I have been getting some of the buffets of late; but have amply earned them—you need not pity me. Pity sick children and the individual poor man; not the mass. Don't pity anybody else, and never pity fools. The optimistic Stevenson; but there is a sense in these wanderings.

Now I have heard your letter, and my sermon was not mal-à-propos. For you seem to be complaining. Everybody's home is depressing, I believe; it is their difficult business to make it less so. There is an unpleasant saying, which would have pricked me sharply at your age.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Cosmo Monkhouse

La Solitude, Hyères [*April* 24, 1884]

DEAR MONKHOUSE,—If you are in love with repose, here is your occasion: change with me. I am too blind to read, hence no reading; I am too weak to walk, hence no walking; I am not allowed to speak, hence no

talking; but the great simplification has yet to be named; for, if this goes on, I shall soon have nothing to eat—and hence, O Hallelujah! hence no eating. The offer is a fair one: I have not sold myself to the devil, for I could never find him. I am married, but so are you. I sometimes write verses, but so do you. Come! *Hic quies!* As for the commandments, I have broken them so small that they are the dust of my chambers; you walk upon them, triturate and toothless; and with the Golosh of Philosophy, they shall not bite your heel. True, the tenement is falling. Ay, friend, but yours also. Take a large view; what is a year or two? dust in the balance! 'Tis done, behold you Cosmo Stevenson, and me R. L. Monkhouse; you at Hyères, I in London; you rejoicing in the clammiest repose, me proceeding to tear your tabernacle into rags, as I have already so admirably torn my own.

My place to which I now introduce you—it is yours—is like a London house, high and very narrow; upon the lungs I will not linger; the heart is large enough for a ballroom; the belly greedy and inefficient; the brain stocked with the most damnable explosives, like a dynamiter's den. The whole place is well furnished, though not in a very pure taste; Corinthian much of it; showy and not strong.

About your place I shall try to find my way alone, an interesting exploration. Imagine me, as I go to bed, falling over a blood-stained remorse; opening that cupboard in the cerebellum and being welcomed by the spirit of your murdered uncle. I should probably not like your remorses; I wonder if you will like mine; I have a spirited assortment; they whistle in my ear o' nights like a northeaster. I trust yours don't dine with the family; mine are better mannered; you will hear nought of them till 2 A.M., except one, to be sure, that I have made a pet of, but he is small; I keep him in buttons, so as to avoid commentaries; you will like him much—if you like what is genuine.

Must we likewise change religions? Mine is a good

article, with a trick of stopping; cathedral bell note; ornamental dial; supported by Venus and the Graces; quite a summer-parlour piety. Of yours, since your last, I fear there is little to be said.

There is one article I wish to take away with me: my spirits. They suit me. I don't want yours; I like my own; I have had them a long while in bottle. It is my only reservation.—Yours (as you decide),

R. L. MONKHOUSE.

To W. E. HENLEY

La Solitude, Hyères [*May*, 1884]

DEAR BOY,—*Old Mortality* * is out, and I am glad to say Coggie likes it. We like her immensely.

I keep better, but no great shakes yet; cannot work—cannot: that is flat, not even verses: as for prose, that more active place is shut on me long since.

My view of life is essentially the comic; and the romantically comic. *As You Like It* is to me the most bird-haunted spot in letters; *Tempest* and *Twelfth Night* follow. These are what I mean by poetry and nature. I make an effort of my mind to be quite one with Molière, except upon the stage, where his inimitable *jeux de scène* beggar belief; but you will observe they are stage-plays—things *ad hoc;* not great Olympian debauches of the heart and fancy; hence more perfect, and not so great. Then I come, after great wanderings, to Carmosine, and to Fantasio; to one part of La Dernière Aldini (which, by the by, we might dramatise in a week), to the notes that Meredith has found, Evan and the postillion, Evan and Rose, Harry in Germany. And to me these things are the good; beauty, touched with sex and laughter; beauty with God's earth for the background. Tragedy does not seem to

* The essay so called, suggested by the death of J. W. Ferrier. See *Memories and Portraits*. "Coggie" is the familiar name of a sister of Ferrier's.

me to come off; and when it does, it does so by the heroic illusion; the anti-masque has been omitted; laughter, which attends on all our steps in life, and sits by the deathbed, and certainly redacts the epitaph, laughter has been lost from these great-hearted lies. But the comedy which keeps the beauty and touches the terrors of our life (laughter and tragedy-in-a-good-humour having kissed), that is the last word of moved representation; embracing the greatest number of elements of fate and character; and telling its story, not with the one eye of pity, but with the two of pity and mirth.

R. L. S.

A letter from the proof-reader of R. L. S.'s *Black Arrow* and R. L. S.'s reply.

Red Lion House, London
[*Undated*]

TO THE AUTHOR

DEAR SIR,—At the risk of incurring your displeasure I venture to point out to you what may be an intentional omission, but which, I think, is probably an oversight. There were four black arrows, to be used with deadly intent. Three have been accounted for. In this concluding instalment the fourth has not been mentioned; nor is there any indication of the fate of Sir Oliver, for whom the fourth arrow is evidently intended. This has occurred to me all the more forcibly because Sir Oliver's dreadful terror of a violent death has been on more than one occasion so vividly represented.

Believe me, Sir, to be, not your critic, but your servant

THE READER, *Young Folks Magazine.*

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var, France
[*Undated*]

TO THE READER

DEAR SIR,—To the contrary I thank you most cordially; indeed, the story having changed and run away

from me in the course of writing, the dread fate I had originally designed for Sir Oliver became impossible, and I had, I blush to say it, clean forgot him.

Thanks to you, Sir, he shall die the death. I enclose to-night slips 49, 50, 51; and to-morrow or next day, after having butchered the priest, shall despatch the rest.

I must not, however, allow this opportunity to go by without once more thanking you—for I think we have, in a ghostly fashion, met before on the margin of proof—for the unflagging intelligence and care with which my MS. is read. I have a large and generally a disastrous experience of printers and printers' readers. Nowhere do I send worse copy than to *Young Folks*, for with this sort of story, I rarely re-write; yet nowhere am I so well used. And the skill with which the somewhat arbitrary and certainly baffling dialect was picked up in the case of the *Black Arrow*, filled me with a gentle surprise.

I will add that you have humiliated me: that you should have been so much more wide-awake than myself is both humiliating and, I say it very humbly, perhaps flattering.

The reader is a kind of veiled prophet between the author and the public—a veiled anonymous intermediary: and it pleases me to greet and thank him.

Your obliged servant,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

Alias Capt'n George North.

To Edmund Gosse

Early in May Stevenson again fell very dangerously ill with hemorrhage of the lungs, and lay for several weeks between life and death, until towards the end of June he was brought sufficiently round to venture by slow stages on the journey to England, staying for two or three weeks at Royat on the way. His correspondent had lately been appointed Clark Reader in English Literature at Trinity College, Cambridge.

[*La Solitude, Hyères*] *From my Bed, May* 29, 1884

DEAR GOSSE,—The news of the Professorate found me in the article of—well, of heads or tails; I am still in bed, and a very poor person. You must thus excuse my damned delay; but, I assure you, I was delighted. You will believe me the more, if I confess to you that my first sentiment was envy; yes, sir, on my blood-boltered couch I envied the professor. However, it was not of long duration; the double thought that you deserved and that you would thoroughly enjoy your success fell like balsam on my wounds. How came it that you never communicated my rejection of Gilder's offer for the *Rhone?* But it matters not. Such earthly vanities are over for the present. This has been a fine well-conducted illness. A month in bed; a month of silence; a fortnight of not stirring my right hand; a month of not moving without being lifted. Come! *Ça y est:* devilish like being dead.—Yours, dear Professor, academically,

R. L. S.

I am soon to be moved to Royat; an invalid valet goes with me! I got him cheap—second-hand.

In turning over my late friend Ferrier's commonplace book, I find three poems from *Viol and Flute* copied out in his hand: "When Flower-time," "Love in Winter," and "Mistrust." They are capital too. But I thought the fact would interest you. He was no poetist either; so it means the more. "Love in W.!" I like the best.

To MRS. MACMORLAND

MY DEAR MRS. MACMORLAND,*—And so it was—the painful truth was thus and not otherwise and I am a

* Concerning this correspondent I have no knowledge and find no other reference to her.—S. C.

red-handed, naked savage, adorned with scalps. I do nothing now but scalp, except neglect to meet my liabilities; my position as a fraudulent bankrupt is the only thing undeniably civilised about me. I have been ill; I have done no work for eight months; I have about ruined my father; and as I have never answered a letter nor paid a debt, I am in self-defence, obliged to glory in my abasement and wrap myself in the Pirate Flag. Even my wife, I cheat and neglect—to keep my hand in.

In a better world I may again find and attire myself in what once I used to call my virtues. Or perhaps, when I recollect the various trunks, boxes and cases with which I have bestrewed the fair face of Europe and a considerable proportion of the states of North America—I may find, in one of them, the aged and leathery remnants of my conscience. But in the meanwhile take me for what I am, a Devil Incarnate, An Unrepentant Bilk and Bandit, A man who lacks but the opportunity to Ruin Empires.

Don't try to excuse me; I am inexcusable. But write and give us news; and remember me in your prayers.

R. L. D. Stevenson.

Chalet la Solitude.
Hyères,
Var,
France.

I have added, as you will perceive, a new initial to my signature, a D., fatal capital! Its significance, the mind shudders to conceive.

To Sidney Colvin

Enclosing some supplementary verses for the *Child's Garden.*

Marseille, June, 1884

Dear S. C.,—Are these four in time? No odds about order. I am at Marseille and stood the journey won-

derfully. Better address Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, Puy de Dôme. You see how this d—d poeshie flows from me in sickness: Are they good or bad? Wha kens? But I like the *Little Land*, I think, as well as any. As time goes on I get more fancy in. We have no money, but a valet and a maid. The valet is no end; how long can you live on a valet? Vive le valet! I am tempted to call myself a valetudinarian. I love my love with a V because he is a Valetudinarian; I took him to Valetta or Valais, gave him his Vails and tenderly addressed him with one word,

Vale.

P.S.—It does not matter of course about order. As soon as I have all the slips I shall organise the book for the publisher. A set of 8 will be put together under the title *An Only Child;* another cycle of 10 will be called *In the Garden*, and other six called *Bedtime* to end all up. It will now make quite a little volume of a good way upwards of 100 pp. Will you instruct Bain to send me a Bible; of a type that I can read without blindness; the better if with notes; there is a Clarendon Press Bible, pray see it yourself. I also want Ewald's *History* in a translation.

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The play of *Deacon Brodie*, the joint work of R. L. S. and W. E. H., was to be performed in London early in July.

[*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, July,* 1884]

Dear S. C.,—Books received with great thanks. Very nice books, though I see you underrate my cecity: I could no more read their beautiful Bible than I could sail in heaven. However, I have sent for another and can read the rest for patience.

I quite understand your feelings about the *Deacon*, which is a far way behind; but I get miserable when I

think of Henley cutting this splash and standing, I fear, to lose a great deal of money. It is about Henley, not *Brodie*, that I care. I fear my affections are not strong to my past works; they are blotted out by others; and anyhow the *Deacon* is damn bad.

I am half asleep and can no more discourse. Say to your friends, "Look here, some friends of mine are bringing out a play; it has some stuff; suppose you go and see it." But I know I am a cold, unbelieving fellow, incapable of those hot claps that honour you and Henley and therefore—I am asleep. *Child's Garden* (first instalment) come. Fanny ill; self asleep.

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, [*July,* 1884]

My dear People,—The weather has been demoniac; I have had a skiff of cold, and was finally obliged to take to bed entirely; to-day, however, it has cleared, the sun shines, and I begin to

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Several days after.—I have been out once, but now am back in bed. I am better, and keep better, but the weather is a mere injustice. The imitation of Edinburgh is, at times, deceptive; there is a note among the chimney pots that suggests Howe Street; though I think the shrillest spot in Christendom was not upon the Howe Street side, but in front, just under the Miss Graemes' big chimney stack. It had a fine alto character—a sort of bleat that used to divide the marrow in my joints—say in the wee, slack hours. That music is now lost to us by rebuilding; another air that I remember, not regret, was the solo of the gas-burner in the little front room; a knickering, flighty, fleering, and yet spectral cackle. I mind it above all on winter afternoons, late, when the window was blue and spotted with rare raindrops, and, looking out, the cold evening was

seen blue all over, with the lamps of Queen's and Frederick's Street dotting it with yellow, and flaring eastward in the squalls. Heavens, how unhappy I have been in such circumstances—I, who have now positively forgotten the colour of unhappiness; who am full like a fed ox, and dull like a fresh turf, and have no more spiritual life, for good or evil, than a French bagman.

We are at Chabassière's, for of course it was nonsense to go up the hill when we could not walk.

The child's poems in a far extended form are likely soon to be heard of—which Cummy I dare say will be glad to know. They will make a book of about one hundred pages.—Ever your affectionate,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

I had reported to Stevenson a remark made by one of his warmest admirers, Sir E. Burne-Jones, on some particular analogy, I forgot what, between a passage of Defoe and one in *Treasure Island*.

[*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, July,* 1884]

. . . Here is a quaint thing, I have read *Robinson, Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Memoirs of a Cavalier, History of the Plague, History of the Great Storm, Scotch Church and Union.* And there my knowledge of Defoe ends—except a book, the name of which I forget, about Peterborough in Spain, which Defoe obviously did not write, and could not have written if he wanted. To which of these does B. J. refer? I guess it must be the history of the Scottish Church. I jest: for, of course, I *know* it must be a book I have never read, and which this makes me keen to read—I mean *Captain Singleton.* Can it be got and sent to me? If *Treasure Island* is at all like it, it will be delightful. I was just the other day wondering at my folly in not remembering it, when I was writing *T. I.,* as a mine for

pirate tips. *T. I.* came out of Kingsley's *At Last*, where I got the Dead Man's Chest—and that was the seed—and out of the great Captain Johnson's *History of Notorious Pirates*. The scenery is Californian in part, and in part *chic*.

I was downstairs to-day! So now I am a made man —till the next time.

R. L. Stevenson.

If it was *Captain Singleton*, send it to me, won't you?

Later.—My life dwindles into a kind of valley of the shadow picnic. I cannot read; so much of the time (as to-day) I must not speak above my breath, that to play patience, or to see my wife play it, is become the be-all and the end-all of my dim career. To add to my gaiety, I may write letters, but there are few to answer. Patience and Poesy are thus my rod and staff; with these I not unpleasantly support my days.

I am very dim, dumb, dowie, and damnable. I hate to be silenced; and if to talk by signs is my forte (as I contend), to understand them cannot be my wife's. Do not think me unhappy; I have not been so for years; but I am blurred, inhabit the debatable frontier of sleep, and have but dim designs upon activity. All is at a standstill: books closed, paper put aside, the voice, the eternal voice of R. L. S., well silenced. Hence this plaint reaches you with no very great meaning, no very great purpose, and written part in slumber by a heavy, dull, somnolent, superannuated son of a bedpost.

To W. E. Henley

I suppose, but cannot remember, that I had in the meantime sent him *Captain Singleton*.

[*Hôtel Chabassière, Royat, July*, 1884]

Dear Boy,—I am glad that —— —— has disappointed you. Depend upon it, nobody is so bad as

to be worth scalping, except your dearest friends and parents; and scalping them may sometimes be avoided by scalping yourself. I grow daily more lymphatic and benign; bring me a dynamiter, that I may embrace and bless him!—So, if I continue to evade the friendly hemorrhage, I shall be spared in anger to pour forth senile and insignificant volumes, and the clever lads in the journals, not doubting of the eye of Nemesis, shall mock and gird at me.

All this seems excellent news of the *Deacon*. But O! that the last tableau, on from Leslie's entrance, were rewritten! We had a great opening there and missed it. I read for the first time *Captain Singleton;* it has points; and then I re-read *Colonel Jack* with ecstasy; the first part is as much superior to *Robinson Crusoe* as *Robinson* is to—*The Inland Voyage*. It is pretty, good, philosophical, dramatic, and as picturesque as a promontory goat in a gale of wind. Get it and fill your belly with honey.

Fanny hopes to be in time for the *Deacon*. I was out yesterday, and none the worse. We leave Monday.

R. L. S.

VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

September, 1884—August, 1887

VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

ARRIVING in England at the end of July, 1884, Stevenson took up his quarters first for a few weeks at Richmond. He was compelled to abandon the hope of making his permanent home at Hyères, partly by the renewed failure there of his own health, partly by a bad outbreak of cholera which occurred in the old Provençal town about the time he left it. After consultation with several doctors, all of whom held out hopes of ultimate recovery despite the gravity of his present symptoms, he moved to Bournemouth. Here he found in the heaths and pinewoods some distant semblance of the landscape of his native Scotland, and in the sandy curves of the Channel coast a passable substitute for the bays and promontories of his beloved Mediterranean. At all events, he liked the place well enough to be willing to try it for a home; and such it became for all but three years, from September, 1884, to August, 1887. These, although in the matter of health the worst and most trying years of his life, were in the matter of work some of the most active and successful. For the first two or three months the Stevensons occupied a lodging on the West Cliff called Wensleydale; for the next five, from mid-November, 1884, to mid-April, 1885, they were tenants of a house named Bonallie Towers, pleasantly situated amid the pinewoods of Branksome Park, and by its name recalling familiar Midlothian associations. Lastly, about Easter, 1885, they entered into occupation of a house of their own, given by the elder Mr. Stevenson as a special gift to his daughter-in-law, and renamed by its new occupants Skerryvore, in reminiscence of one of the great

lighthouse works carried out by the family firm off the Scottish coast.

During all the time of Stevenson's residence at Bournemouth he was compelled to lead the life, irksome to him above all men, but borne with invincible spirit and patience, of a chronic invalid and almost constant prisoner to the house. A great part of his time had perforce to be spent in bed, and there almost all his literary work was produced. Often for days, and sometimes for whole weeks together, he was forbidden to speak aloud, and compelled to carry on conversation with his family and friends in whispers or with the help of pencil and paper. The few excursions to a distance which he attempted—most commonly to my house at the British Museum, once to Cambridge, once to Matlock, once to Exeter, and once in 1886 as far as Paris—these excursions generally ended in a breakdown and a hurried retreat to home and bed. Nevertheless, he was able in intervals of comparative ease to receive and enjoy the visits of friends from a distance both old and new—among the most welcome of the latter being Mr. Henry James, Mr. William Archer, and Mr. John S. Sargent; while among Bournemouth residents who attached themselves to him on terms of special intimacy and affection were Sir Percy and Lady Shelley and Sir Henry and Lady Taylor and their daughters.

At the same time, seizing and making the most of every week, nay, every day and hour of respite, he contrived to produce work surprising alike, under the circumstances, by quantity and quality. During the first two months of his life at Bournemouth the two plays *Admiral Guinea* and *Beau Austin* were written in collaboration with Mr. Henley, and many other dramatic schemes were broached which health and leisure failed him to carry out. In the course of the next few months he finished *Prince Otto*, *The Child's Garden of Verses*, and *More New Arabian Nights*, all three of which had been begun, and the two first almost com-

pleted, before he left Hyères. He at the same time attacked two new tasks—a highway novel called *The Great North Road*, and a *Life of Wellington* for a series edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, both of which he had in the sequel to abandon; and a third, the boys' story of *Kidnapped*, which in its turn had to be suspended, but on its completion the following year turned out one of the most brilliant of his successes.

About midsummer of 1885 he was distressed by the sudden death of his old and kind friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin, and after a while undertook the task of writing a memoir of him to be prefixed to his collected papers. Towards the close of the same year he was busy with what proved to be the most popular of all his writings, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and with the Christmas story of *Olalla*. *Jekyll and Hyde* was published in January, 1886, and after threatening for the first week or two to fall flat, in no long time caught the attention of all classes of readers, was quoted from a hundred pulpits, and made the writer's name familiar to multitudes both in England and America whom it had never reached before. A success scarcely inferior, though of another kind, was made a few months afterwards by *Kidnapped*, which Stevenson had taken up again in the early spring, and which was published about midsummer. After completing his task in March, he was able to do little work during the remainder of the year, except in preparing materials for the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*, and in writing occasional verses which helped to make up the collection published in the following year under the title *Underwoods*. In the early autumn of the same year, 1886, he took a longer and more successful excursion from home than usual, staying without breakdown for two or three weeks at the Monument, as he always called my house at the British Museum, and seeing something of kindred spirits among his elders, such as Mr. Robert Browning, Mr. J. R. Lowell, the painters Burne-Jones and W. B. Richmond, and others who had

hitherto delighted in his work, and now learned to delight no less in his society.

Thence he went with Mr. Henley for a short trip to Paris, chiefly in order to see the sculptor Rodin and his old friends Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Low. From this trip he returned none the worse, but during all the later autumn and winter at Bournemouth was again hampered in his work by renewed and prolonged attacks of illness. A further cause of trouble was the distressing failure of his father's health and spirits, attended by symptoms which plainly indicated the beginning of the end.

For some weeks of April, 1887, he was much taken up with a scheme which had nothing to do with literature. He had, as we have seen, taken deeply to heart both what he thought the guilty remissness of Government action in the matter of the Soudan garrisons and of Gordon, and the tameness of acquiescence with which the national conscience appeared to take the results. He had been not less disturbed at the failure of successive administrations to assert the reign of law in Ireland. He was no blind partisan of the English cause in that country, and had even written of the hereditary hatred of Irish for English as a sentiment justified by the facts of history. But he held strongly that private warfare, the use of dynamite and the knife, with the whole system of agrarian vengeances and the persecution of the weak, were means which no end could justify; and that redress of grievances, whatever form it might ultimately take, must be preceded by the re-establishment of law. In *More New Arabian Nights*, published the year before, he had endeavoured "to make dynamite ridiculous if he could not make it horrible," and to the old elements of fantastic invention, and humorously solemn realism in the unreal, had added the new element of a witty and scornful criminal psychology. A case that now appealed to him with especial force was that of the persecution kept up against the widow and daughters of the murdered man Curtin.

He determined that if no one else would take up the duty of resisting such persecution without regard to consequences, he would take it up himself, in the hope of more effectually rousing the public conscience to the evils of the time. His plan was to go with his family, occupy and live upon the derelict farm, and let happen what would. This, as the letters referring to the matter plainly show, was no irresponsible dream or whim, but a purpose conceived in absolute and sober earnest. His wife and household were prepared to follow, though under protest, had he persisted; as it seemed for some weeks that he certainly would, until at last the arguments of his friends, and above all the unmistakable evidence that his father's end was near, persuaded him to give up his purpose. But to the last, I think he was never well satisfied that in giving way he had not been a coward, preferring fireside ease and comfort to the call of a public duty.

After spending a part of the winter at Bournemouth and a part at Torquay, both Stevenson's parents returned to Edinburgh in April, 1887; and within a few weeks after their arrival he was summoned north to his father's deathbed. After spending at Edinburgh the short time necessary for the dispatch of business, he returned to his own sickroom life at Skerryvore.

During the two years and nine months of Stevenson's residence at Bournemouth, preceding the date of his father's death, he had made no apparent progress towards recovery. Every period of respite had been quickly followed by a relapse, and all his work, brilliant and varied as it was, had been done under conditions which would have reduced almost any other man to inactivity. The close and frequently recurring struggles against the danger of death from hemorrhage and exhaustion, which he had been used, when they first occurred, to find exciting, grew in the long run merely irksome, and even his persistent high courage and gaiety, sustained as they were by the devoted affection of his wife and many friends, began occasionally, for

the first time, to fail him. Accordingly, when in May, 1887, the death of his father severed the strongest of the ties which bound him to the old country, he was very ready to listen to the advice of his physicians, who were unanimous in thinking his case not hopeless, but urged him to try some complete change of climate, surroundings, and mode of life. His wife's connections pointing to the West, he thought of the mountain health-resorts of Colorado, and of their growing reputation for the cure of lung patients. Having let his house at Bournemouth, he accordingly took passage on board the s.s. *Ludgate Hill*, sailing for New York from London on August 21st, 1887, with his whole party, consisting of his wife, his widowed mother, whom they had persuaded to join them, his young stepson, and a trusted servant, Valentine Roch. The concluding letters of the present section tell of the preparations for this departure.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, Sunday, 28th September, 1884

My dear People,—I keep better, and am to-day downstairs for the first time. I find the lockers entirely empty; not a cent to the front. Will you pray send us some? It blows an equinoctial gale, and has blown for nearly a week. Nimbus Britannicus; piping wind, lashing rain; the sea is a fine colour, and wind-bound ships lie at anchor under the Old Harry rocks, to make one glad to be ashore.

The Henleys are gone, and two plays practically done. I hope they may produce some of the ready.—I am, ever affectionate son, R. L. S.

To Andrew Chatto

During the earlier Bournemouth days were firmly established Stevenson's cordial relations with the several English publishers, Cassell & Co., Chatto & Windus, and Longmans, and a little later with Charles Scribner's Sons in America.

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, October 3, 1884

Dear Mr. Chatto,—I have an offer of £25 for *Otto* from America. I do not know if you mean to have the American rights; from the nature of the contract, I think not; but if you understood that you were to sell the sheets, I will either hand over the bargain to you, or finish it myself and hand you over the money if you are pleased with the amount. You see, I leave this quite in your hands. To parody an old Scotch story of servant and master: if you don't know that you have a good author, I know that I have a good publisher. Your fair, open, and handsome dealings are a good point in my life, and do more for my crazy health than has yet been done by any doctor.—Very truly yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

There is no certain clue to the date of the following; neither has it been possible to make sure what was the enclosure mentioned. The special illness referred to seems to be that of the preceding May at Hyères.

[*Wenslcydale, Bournemouth, October,* 1884?]

Dear Boy,—I trust this finds you well; it leaves me so-so. The weather is so cold that I must stick to bed, which is rotten and tedious, but can't be helped.

I find in the blotting book the enclosed, which I wrote to you the eve of my blood. Is it not strange? That night, when I naturally thought I was coopered, the thought of it was much in my mind; I thought it had gone; and I thought what a strange prophecy I had made in jest, and how it was indeed like to be the end of many letters. But I have written a good few since, and the spell is broken. I am just as pleased, for I earnestly desire to live. This pleasant middle age into whose port we are steering is quite to my fancy. I would cast anchor here, and go ashore for twenty years, and see the manners of the place. Youth was a great time, but somewhat fussy. Now in middle age (bar lucre) all seems mighty placid. It likes me; I spy a little bright café in one corner of the port, in front of which I now propose we should sit down. There is just enough of the bustle of the harbour and no more; and the ships are close in, regarding us with stern-windows—the ships that bring deals from Norway and parrots from the Indies. Let us sit down here for twenty years, with a packet of tobacco and a drink, and talk of art and women. By-and-by, the whole city will sink, and the ships too, and the table, and we also; but we shall have sat for twenty years and had a fine talk; and by that time, who knows? exhausted the subject.

I send you a book which (or I am mistook) will please you; it pleased me. But I do desire a book of

adventure—a romance—and no man will get or write me one. Dumas I have read and re-read too often; Scott, too, and I am short. I want to hear swords clash. I want a book to begin in a good way; a book, I guess, like *Treasure Island,* alas! which I have never read, and cannot though I live to ninety. I would God that some one else had written it! By all that I can learn, it is the very book for my complaint. I like the way I hear it opens; and they tell me John Silver is good fun. And to me it is, and must ever be, a dream unrealised, a book unwritten. O my sighings after romance, or even Skeltery, and O! the weary age which will produce me neither!

CHAPTER I

The night was damp and cloudy, the ways foul. The single horseman, cloaked and booted, who pursued his way across Willesden Common, had not met a traveller, when the sound of wheels——

CHAPTER I

"Yes, sir," said the old pilot, "she must have dropped into the bay a little afore dawn. A queer craft she looks."

"She shows no colours," returned the young gentleman musingly.

"They're a-lowering of a quarter-boat, Mr. Mark," resumed the old salt. "We shall soon know more of her."

"Ay," replied the young gentleman called Mark, "and here, Mr. Seadrift, comes your sweet daughter Nancy tripping down the cliff."

"God bless her kind heart, sir," ejaculated old Seadrift.

CHAPTER I

The notary, Jean Rossignol, had been summoned to the top of a great house in the Isle St. Louis to make

a will; and now, his duties finished, wrapped in a warm roquelaure and with a lantern swinging from one hand, he issued from the mansion on his homeward way. Little did he think what strange adventures were to befall him!——

That is how stories should begin. And I am offered HUSKS instead.

What should be:	What is:
The Filibuster's Cache.	Aunt Anne's Tea Cosy.
Jerry Abershaw.	Mrs. Brierly's Niece.
Blood Money: A Tale.	Society: A Novel.

R. L. S.

To Sir Walter Simpson

I cannot remember who was Lawson (? Sir Wilfred) nor what his pamphlet was about.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth
[first week of November, 1884]

MY DEAR SIMPSON,—At last, after divers adventures here we are: not Pommery and Greno as you see, "but jist plain auld Bonellie, no very faur frae Jenniper Green," as I might say if I were writing to Charles. I hope now to receive a good bundle from you ere long; and I will try to be both prompt and practical in response. I hope to hear your boy is better: ah, that's where it bites, I know, that is where the childless man rejoices; although, to confess fully, my whole philosophy of life renounces these renunciations; I am persuaded we gain nothing in the least comparable to what we lose, by holding back the hand from any province of life; the intrigue, the imbroglio, such as it is, was made for the plunger and not for the teetotaler. And anyway I hope your news is good.

I have nearly finished Lawson's most lively pamphlet. It is very clear and interesting. For myself, I am in our house—a home of our own, in a most lovely

situation, among forest trees, where I hope you will come and see us and find me in a repaired and more comfortable condition—greatly pleased with it—rather hard-up, verging on the dead-broke—and full tilt at hammering up some New Arabians for the pot.

I wonder what you do without regular habits of work. I am capable of only two theories of existence: the industrious worker's, the spreester's; all between seems blank to me. We grow too old, and I, at least, am too much deteriorated, for the last; and the first becomes a bedrock necessary. My father is in a gloomy state and has the yellow flag at the peak, or the fore, or wherever it should be; and he has just emptied some melancholy vials on me; I am also, by way of change, spitting blood. This somewhat clouds the termination of my note.—Yours ever affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THE REV. PROFESSOR LEWIS CAMPBELL

In reply to a gift of books, including the correspondent's well-known translation of Sophocles.

[*Wensleydale, Bournemouth, November,* 1884]

MY DEAR CAMPBELL,—The books came duly to hand. My wife has occupied the translation ever since, nor have I yet been able to dislodge her. As for the primer, I have read it with a very strange result: that I find no fault. If you knew how, dogmatic and pugnacious, I stand warden on the literary art, you would the more appreciate your success and my—well, I will own it—disappointment. For I love to put people right (or wrong) about the arts. But what you say of Tragedy and of Sophocles very amply satisfies me; it is well felt and well said; a little less technically than it is my weakness to desire to see it put, but clear and adequate. You are very right to express your admiration for the resource displayed in Œdipus King; it is a miracle. Would it not have been well to

mention Voltaire's interesting onslaught, a thing which gives the best lesson of the difference of neighbour arts?—since all his criticisms, which had been fatal to a narrative, do not amount among them to exhibit one flaw in this masterpiece of drama. For the drama, it is perfect; though such a fable in a romance might make the reader crack his sides, so imperfect, so ethereally slight is the verisimilitude required of these conventional, rigid, and egg-dancing arts.

I was sorry to see no more of you; but shall conclude by hoping for better luck next time. My wife begs to be remembered to both of you.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

The "Arabs" mentioned below are the stories comprised in the volume *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter,* written by Stevenson and his wife in collaboration.

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, November, 1884

DEAR HENLEY,—We are all to pieces in health, and heavily handicapped with Arabs. I have a dreadful cough, whose attacks leave me *aetat.* 90. I never let up on the Arabs, all the same, and rarely get less than eight pages out of hand, though hardly able to come downstairs for twittering knees.

I shall put in ——'s letter. He says so little of his circumstances that I am in an impossibility to give him advice more specific than a copy-book. Give him my love, however, and tell him it is the mark of the parochial gentleman who has never travelled to find all wrong in a foreign land. Let him hold on, and he will find one country as good as another; and in the meanwhile let him resist the fatal British tendency to communicate his dissatisfaction with a country to its inhabitants. 'Tis a good idea, but it somehow fails to please. In a fortnight, if I can keep my spirit

in the box at all, I should be nearly through this Arabian desert; so can tackle something fresh.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

It was some twenty months since the plan of publishing the *Child's Garden* in the first instance as a picture-book had been mooted (see page 113 of this volume). But it had never taken effect, and in the following March the volume appeared without illustrations in England, and also, I believe, in America.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth, Hants, England, First week in November, I guess, 1884

My dear Low,—Now look here, the above is my address for three months, I hope; continue, on your part, if you please, to write to Edinburgh, which is safe, but if Mrs. Low thinks of coming to England, she might take a run down from London (four hours from Waterloo, main line) and stay a day or two with us among the pines. If not, I hope it will be only a pleasure deferred till you can join her.

My Children's Verses will be published here in a volume called *A Child's Garden*. The sheets are in hand; I will see if I cannot send you the lot, so that you might have a bit of a start. In that case I would do nothing to publish in the States, and you might try an illustrated edition there; which, if the book went fairly over here, might, when ready, be imported. But of this more fully ere long. You will see some verses of mine in the last *Magazine of Art*, with pictures by a young lady; rather pretty, I think. If we find a market for *Phasellulus loquitur*, we can try another. I hope it isn't necessary to put the verse into that rustic printing. I am philistine enough to prefer clean printer's type; indeed, I can form no idea of the verses thus transcribed by the inult and tottering hand of the draughtsman, nor gather any impression beyond one of weariness to the eyes. Yet the other day, in

the *Century*, I saw it imputed as a crime to Vedder that he had not thus travestied Omar Khayyàm. We live in a rum age of music without airs, stories without incident, pictures without beauty, American wood engravings that should have been etchings, and dry-point etchings that ought to have been mezzotints. I think of giving 'em literature without words; and I believe if you were to try invisible illustration, it would enjoy a considerable vogue. So long as an artist is on his head, is painting with a flute, or writes with an etcher's needle, or conducts the orchestra with a meat-axe, all is well; and plaudits shower along with roses. But any plain man who tries to follow the obtrusive canons of his art, is but a commonplace figure. To hell with him is the motto, or at least not that; for he will have his reward, but he will never be thought a person of parts.

January 3, 1885.—And here has this been lying near two months. I have failed to get together a preliminary copy of the *Child's Verses* for you, in spite of doughty efforts; but yesterday I sent you the first sheet of the definitive edition, and shall continue to send the others as they come. If you can, and care to, work them—why so, well. If not, I send you fodder. But the time presses; for though I will delay a little over the proofs, and though it is even possible they may delay the English issue until Easter, it will certainly not be later. Therefore perpend, and do not get caught out. Of course, if you can do pictures, it will be a great pleasure to me to see our names joined; and more than that, a great advantage, as I daresay you may be able to make a bargain for some share a little less spectral than the common for the poor author. But this is all as you shall choose; I give you *carte blanche* to do or not to do.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

O, Sargent has been and painted my portrait; a very nice fellow he is, and is supposed to have done well; it

is a poetical but very chicken-boned figurehead, as thus represented. R. L. S. Go on.

P.P.S.—Your picture came; and let me thank you for it very much. I am so hunted I had near forgotten. I find it very graceful; and I mean to have it framed.

To Thomas Stevenson

About this time Mr. Stevenson was in some hesitation as to letting himself be proposed for the office of President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, November, 1884

My dear Father,—I have no hesitation in recommending you to let your name go up; please yourself about an address; though I think, if we could meet, we could arrange something suitable. What you propose would be well enough in a way, but so modest as to suggest a whine. From that point of view it would be better to change a little; but this, whether we meet or not, we must discuss. Tait, Chrystal, the Royal Society, and I, all think you amply deserve this honour and far more; it is not the True Blue to call this serious compliment a "trial"; you should be glad of this recognition. As for resigning, that is easy enough if found necessary; but to refuse would be husky and unsatisfactory. *Sic subs.*

R. L. S.

My cold is still very heavy; but I carry it well. Fanny is very, very much out of sorts, principally through perpetual misery with me. I fear I have been a little in the dumps, which, *as you know, sir,* is a very great sin. I must try to be more cheerful; but my cough is so severe that I have sometimes most exhausting nights and very peevish wakenings. However, this shall be remedied, and last night I was distinctly better than the night before. There is, my dear Mr. Stevenson (so I moralise blandly as we sit together on the

devil's garden-wall) no more abominable sin than this gloom, this plaguy peevishness; why (say I) what matters it if we be a little uncomfortable—that is no reason for mangling our unhappy wives. And then I turn and *girn* on the unfortunate Cassandra.—Your fellow culprit,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Mr. Stevenson, the elder, had read the play of *Admiral Guinea*, written in September by his son and Mr. Henley in collaboration, and had protested, with his usual vehemence of feeling and expression, against the stage confrontation of profane blackguardry in the person of Pew with evangelical piety in that of the reformed slaving captain who gives his name to the piece.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth
(*The Three B's*) [*November* 5, 1884]

My dear Father,—Allow me to say, in a strictly Pickwickian sense, that you are a silly fellow. I am pained indeed, but how should I be offended? I think you exaggerate; I cannot forget that you had the same impression of the *Deacon;* and yet, when you saw it played, were less revolted than you looked for; and I will still hope that the *Admiral* also is not so bad as you suppose. There is one point, however, where I differ from you very frankly. Religion is in the world; I do not think you are the man to deny the importance of its rôle; and I have long decided not to leave it on one side in art. The opposition of the Admiral and Mr. Pew is not, to my eyes, either horrible or irreverent; but it may be, and it probably is, very ill done: what then? This is a failure; better luck next time; more power to the elbow, more discretion, more wisdom in the design, and the old defeat becomes the scene of the new victory. Concern yourself about no failure; they do not cost lives, as in engineering; they are the *pierres perdues* of successes. Fame is (truly) a vapour; do not think of it; if the writer means well and tries

hard, no failure will injure him, whether with God or man.

I wish I could hear a brighter account of yourself; but I am inclined to acquit the *Admiral* of having a share in the responsibility. My very heavy cold is, I hope, drawing off; and the change to this charming house in the forest will, I hope, complete my re-establishment.—With love to all, believe me, your ever affectionate

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth,
November 11, 1884

DEAR BOY,—I have been nearly smashed altogether; fever and chills, with really very considerable suffering; and to my deep gloom and some fear about the future, work has had to stop. There was no way out of it; yesterday and to-day nothing would come, it was a mere waste of tissue, productive of spoiled paper.

I hope it will not last long; for the bum-baily is panting at my rump, and when I turn a scared eye across my shoulder, I behold his talons quivering above my frockcoat tails.

Gosse has writ to offer me £40 for a Christmas number ghost story for the *Pall Mall:* eight thousand words. I have, with some conditions, accepted; I pray Heaven I may be able to do it. But I am not sure that my incapacity to work is wholly due to illness; I believe the morphine I have been taking for my bray may have a hand in it. It moderates the bray, but I think, sews up the donkey.

I think my wife is a little better. If only I could get in trim, and get this work done, I should be quite chipper.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

This letter and the one on page 227, on the same subject, are written in the styles and characters of the two Edinburgh ex-elders, Thomson and Johnstone (or Johnson) alternately.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park,
Bournemouth, November 11 [1884]

My dear Charles,—I am in my new house, thus proudly styled, as you perceive; but the deevil a tower ava' can be perceived (except out of window); this is not as it should be; one might have hoped, at least, a turret. We are all vilely unwell. I put in the dark watches imitating a donkey with some success, but little pleasure; and in the afternoon I indulge in a smart fever, accompanied by aches and shivers. There is thus little monotony to be deplored. I at least am a *regular* invalid; I would scorn to bray in the afternoon; I would indignantly refuse the proposal to fever in the night. What is bred in the bone will come out, sir, in the flesh; and the same spirit that prompted me to date my letter regulates the hour and character of my attacks.—I am, sir, yours, Thomson.

To Miss Ferrier

The controversy here mentioned had been one in which Mr. Samuel Smiles and others had taken part, concerning the rival claims of Robert Stevenson, the grandfather of R. L. S., and John Rennie to have been the chief engineers of the Bell Rock Lighthouse (see *A Family of Engineers,* chap. iii).

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 12, 1884

My dear Coggie,—Many thanks for the two photos which now decorate my room. I am particularly glad to have the Bell Rock. I wonder if you saw me plunge, lance in rest, into a controversy thereanent? It was a very onesided affair. The man I attacked cried "Boo-hoo!" and referred me to his big brother. And the big brother refused to move. So I slept upon the field of

battle, paraded, sang Te Deum, and came home after a review rather than a campaign.

Please tell Campbell I got his letter. The Wild Woman of the West has been much amiss and complaining sorely. I hope nothing more serious is wrong with her than just my ill-health, and consequent anxiety and labour; but the deuce of it is, that the cause continues. I am about knocked out of time now: a miserable, snuffling, shivering, fever-stricken, nightmare-ridden, knee-jottering, hoast-hoast-hoasting shadow and remains of man. But we'll no gie ower just yet a bittie. We've seen waur; and dod, mem, it's my belief that we'll see better. I dinna ken 'at I've muckle mair to say to ye, or, indeed, onything; but just here's guid-fallowship, guid health, and the wale o' guid fortune to your bonny sel'; and my respecs to the Perfessor and his wife, and the Prinshiple, an' the Bell Rock, an' ony ither public chara'ters that I'm acquaunt wi'.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Bournemouth, November* 13, 1884]

My dear Thomson,—It's a maist remarkable fac', but nae shüner had I written yon braggin,' blawin' letter aboot ma business habits, when bang! that very day, ma hoast * begude in the aifternune. It is really remaurkable; it's providenshle, I believe. The ink wasnae fair dry, the words were nae weel ooten ma mouth, when bang, I got the lee. The mair ye think o't, Thomson, the less ye'll like the looks o't. Proavidence (I'm no' sayin') is all verra weel *in its place;* but if Proavidence has nae mainners, wha's to learn't? Proavidence is a fine thing, but hoo would you like Proavidence to keep your till for ye? The richt place for Proavidence is in the kirk; it has naething to do wi' private correspondence between twa gentlemen, nor freendly cracks, nor a wee bit word of sculduddery†

* Cough. † Improper talk.

ahint the door, nor, in shoart, wi' ony *hole-and-corner wark*, what I would call. I'm pairfec'ly willin' to meet in wi' Proavidence, I'll be proud to meet in wi' him, when my time's come and I cannae dae nae better; but if he's to come skinking aboot my stair-fit, damned, I micht as weel be deid for a' the comfort I'll can get in life. Cannae he no' be made to understand that it's beneath him? Gosh if I was in his business, I would nae steir my heid for a plain, auld ex-elder that, tak him the way he taks himsel', 's just aboot as honest as he can weel afford, an' but for a wheen auld scandals, near forgotten noo, is a pairfec'ly respectable and thoroughly decent man. Or if I fashed wi' him ava', it wad be kind o' handsome like; a pun'-note under his stair door, or a bottle o' auld, blended malt to his bit marnin', as a teshtymonial like yon ye ken sae weel aboot, but mair successfu'.

Dear Thomson, have I ony money? If I have, *send it,* for the loard's sake.

JOHNSTONE.

To W. E. HENLEY

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 13, 1884

MY DEAR BOY,—A thousand thanks for the *Molière.* I have already read, in this noble presentment, *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, Le Malade Imaginaire,* and a part of *Les Femmes Savantes;* I say, Poquelin took damned good care of himself: Argan and Arysule, what parts! Many thanks also for John Silver's pistol; I recognise it; that was the one he gave Jim Hawkins at the mouth of the pit; I shall get a plate put upon it to that effect.

My birthday was a great success; I was better in health; I got delightful presents; I received the definite commission from the P. M. G., and began to write the tale; and in the evening Bob arrived, a simple seraph. We have known each other ten years; and here we are, too, like the pair that met in the infirmary: why can

we not mellow into kindness and sweetness like Bob? What is the reason? Does nature, even in my octogenarian carcase, run too strong that I must be still a bawler and a brawler and a treader upon corns? You, at least, have achieved that miracle of embellishing your personal appearance to that point that, unless your mother is a woman of even more perspicacity than I suppose, it is morally impossible that she can recognise you. When I saw you ten years ago, you looked rough and—kind of stigmatised, a look of an embittered political shoemaker; where is it now? You now come waltzing around like some light-hearted monarch; essentially jovial, essentially royal; radiant of smiles. And in the meanwhile, by a complementary process, I turn into a kind of hunchback with white hair! The devil.

Well, let us be thankful for our mercies: in these ten years what a change from the cell in the hospital, and the two sick boys in the next bed, to the influence, the recognition, the liberty, and the happiness of to-day! Well, well; fortune is not so blind as people say; you dreed a good long weird; but you have got into a fine green paddock now to kick your heels in. And I, too, what a difference; what a difference in my work, in my situation, and unfortunately, also in my health! But one need not complain of a pebble in the shoe, when by mere justice one should rot in a dungeon.

Many thanks to both of you; long life to our friendship, and that means, I do most firmly believe, to these clay continents on which we fly our colours; good luck to one and all, and may God continue to be merciful.—Your old and warm friend, R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Stevenson had been unable to finish for the *Pall Mall* Christmas number the tale he had first intended; had tried the publishers with *Markheim* (afterwards printed in the collection called *The Merry Men*), which proved too short; had then fur-

bished up as well as he could a tale drafted in the Pitlochry days, *The Body-Snatcher,* which was advertised in the streets of London by sandwich-men carrying posters so horrific that they were suppressed, if I remember aright, by the police. Stevenson justly thought the tale not up to his best mark, and would not take the full payment which had been bargained for. His correspondent was just about to start on a tour to the United States. Mr. Charles Morley was at this time manager or assistant-manager of the *Pall Mall Gazette.*

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 15, 1884

My dear Gosse,—This Mr. Morley of yours is a most desperate fellow. He has sent me (for my opinion) the most truculent advertisement I ever saw, in which the white hairs of Gladstone are dragged round Troy behind my chariot wheels. What can I say? I say nothing to him; and to you, I content myself with remarking that he seems a desperate fellow.

All luck to you on your American adventure; may you find health, wealth, and entertainment! If you see, as you likely will, Frank R. Stockton, pray greet him from me in words to this effect:—

> My Stockton if I failed to like,
> It were a sheer depravity,
> For I went down with the *Thomas Hyke*
> And up with the *Negative Gravity!*

I adore these tales.

I hear flourishing accounts of your success at Cambridge, so you leave with a good omen. Remember me to *green corn* if it is in season; if not you had better hang yourself on a sour apple tree, for your voyage has been lost.—Yours affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Austin Dobson

Written in acknowledgment of the gift of a desk.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*December,* 1884?]

Dear Dobson,—Set down my delay to your own fault; I wished to acknowledge such a gift from you

in some of my inapt and slovenly rhymes but you should have sent me your pen and not your desk. The verses stand up to the axles in a miry cross-road, whence the coursers of the sun shall never draw them; hence I am constrained to this uncourtliness, that I must appear before one of the kings of that country of rhyme without my singing robes. For less than this, if we may trust the book of Esther, favourites have tasted death; but I conceive the kingdom of the Muses mildlier mannered; and in particular that country which you administer and which I seem to see as a half-suburban land; a land of hollyhocks and country houses; a land where at night, in thorny and sequestered bypaths, you will meet masqueraders going to a ball in their sedans, and the rector steering homeward by the light of his lantern; a land of the windmill, and the west wind, and the flowering hawthorn with a little scented letter in the hollow of its trunk, and the kites flying over all in the season of kites, and the far away blue spires of a cathedral city.

Will you forgive me, then, for my delay and accept my thanks not only for your present, but for the letter which followed it, and which perhaps I more particularly value, and believe me to be, with much admiration, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson and his wife were still busy on *More New Arabian Nights* (the romance of the *Great North Road* having been begun and postponed). The question here touched is, to what publishers should they be offered.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, December, 1884

DEAR LAD,—For Cassell, I thought the G.N.R. (not railway this time) was the motto. What are Cassells to do with this eccentric mass of blague and seriousness? Their poor auld pows will a' turn white as snaw,

man. They would skriegh with horror. You see, the lot of tales is now coming to a kind of bearing. They are being quite rehandled; all the three intercalary narratives have been condemned and are being replaced —two by picturesque and highly romantic adventures; one by a comic tale of character; and the thing as it goes together so far, is, I do think, singularly varied and vivid, coming near to laughter and touching tears.

Will Cassell stand it? No.

Et de deux.

I vote for the syndicate, and to give Cassell the *North Road* when done. *Et sic subscr.*

R. L. S.

My health is better. I never sleep, to be sure; Cawdor hath butchered sleep; and I am twinged a bit by aches and rheumatism; but I get my five to seven hours of work; and if that is not health, it is the nearest I am like to have.

To Henry James

The following to Henry James refers to the essay of R. L. S. called *A Humble Remonstrance,* which had just appeared in *Longman's Magazine.* Mr. James had written holding out the prospect of a continuance of the friendly controversy which had thus been opened up between them on the aims and qualities of fiction.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth, December 8, 1884

My dear Henry James,—This is a very brave hearing from more points than one. The first point is that there is a hope of a sequel. For this I laboured. Seriously, from the dearth of information and thoughtful interest in the art of literature, those who try to practise it with any deliberate purpose run the risk of finding no fit audience. People suppose it is "the stuff" that interests them; they think, for instance, that the prodigious fine thoughts and sentiments in Shakespeare impress by their own weight, not understanding that

the unpolished diamond is but a stone. They think that striking situations, or good dialogue, are got by studying life; they will not rise to understand that they are prepared by deliberate artifice and set off by painful suppressions. Now, I want the whole thing well ventilated, for my own education and the public's, and I beg you to look as quick as you can, to follow me up with every circumstance of defeat where we differ, and (to prevent the flouting of the laity) to emphasise the points where we agree. I trust your paper will show me the way to a rejoinder; and that rejoinder I shall hope to make with so much art as to woo or drive you from your threatened silence. I would not ask better than to pass my life in beating out this quarter of corn with such a seconder as yourself.

Point the second—I am rejoiced indeed to hear you speak so kindly of my work; rejoiced and surprised. I seem to myself a very rude, left-handed countryman; not fit to be read, far less complimented, by a man so accomplished, so adroit, so craftsmanlike as you. You will happily never have cause to understand the despair with which a writer like myself considers (say) the part scene in *Lady Barberina*. Every touch surprises me by its intangible precision; and the effect when done, as light as syllabub, as distinct as a picture, fills me with envy. Each man among us prefers his own aim, and I prefer mine; but when we come to speak of performance, I recognise myself, compared with you, to be a lout and slouch of the first water.

Where we differ, both as to the design of stories and the delineation of character, I begin to lament. Of course, I am not so dull as to ask you to desert your walk; but could you not, in one novel, to oblige a sincere admirer, and to enrich his shelves with a beloved volume, could you not, and might you not, cast your characters in a mould a little more abstract and academic (dear Mrs. Pennyman had already, among your other work, a taste of what I mean), and pitch the incidents, I do not say in any stronger, but in a slightly

more emphatic key—as it were an episode from one of the old (so-called) novels of adventure? I fear you will not; and I suppose I must sighingly admit you to be right. And yet, when I see, as it were, a book of Tom Jones handled with your exquisite precision and shot through with those sidelights of reflection in which you excel, I relinquish the dear vision with regret. Think upon it.

As you know, I belong to that besotted class of man, the invalid: this puts me to a stand in the way of visits. But it is possible that some day you may feel that a day near the sea and among pinewoods would be a pleasant change from town. If so, please let us know; and my wife and I will be delighted to put you up, and give you what we can to eat and drink (I have a fair bottle of claret).—On the back of which, believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I reopen this to say that I have re-read my paper, and cannot think I have at all succeeded in being either veracious or polite. I knew, of course, that I took your paper merely as a pin to hang my own remarks upon; but, alas! what a thing is any paper! What fine remarks can you not hang on mine! How I have sinned against proportion, and with every effort to the contrary, against the merest rudiments of courtesy to you! You are indeed a very acute reader to have divined the real attitude of my mind; and I can only conclude, not without closed eyes and shrinking shoulders, in the well-worn words,

Lay on, Macduff!

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, December 9, 1884

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—The dreadful tragedy of the *Pall Mall* has come to a happy but ludicrous ending: I am to keep the money, the tale writ for them is to be buried

certain fathoms deep, and they are to flash out before the world with our old friend of Kinnaird, *The Body-Snatcher*. When you come, please to bring—

(1) My Montaigne, or, at least, the two last volumes.
(2) My Milton in the three vols. in green.
(3) The Shakespeare that Babington sent me for a wedding-gift.
(4) Hazlitt's *Table Talk and Plain Speaker*.

If you care to get a box of books from Douglas and Foulis, let them be *solid*. *Croker Papers, Correspondence of Napoleon, History of Henry IV.*, Lang's *Folk Lore*, would be my desires.

I had a charming letter from Henry James about my *Longman* paper. I did not understand queries about the verses; the pictures to the Seagull I thought charming; those to the second have left me with a pain in my poor belly and a swimming in the head.

About money, I am afloat and no more, and I warn you, unless I have great luck, I shall have to fall upon you at the New Year like a hundredweight of bricks. Doctor, rent, chemist, are all threatening; sickness has bitterly delayed my work; and unless, as I say, I have the mischief's luck, I shall completely break down. *Verbum sapientibus*. I do not live cheaply, and I question if I ever shall; but if only I had a half-penny worth of health, I could now easily suffice. The last breakdown of my head is what makes this bankruptcy probable.

Fanny is still out of sorts; Bogue better; self fair, but a stranger to the blessings of sleep.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

December 15, 1884

My dear Mother,—Perhaps the *Milton* is at Hyères; I did not think so, but it might be. It is Lang's *Myths*

that I want. The *Henry Fourth*—let 'em look in the reviews: I can't remember the name, Wiley or something; but it has been reviewed in the *Athenæum*, Saturday, and *Academy* of the past three weeks or month.

Sargent just gone; a charming, simple, clever, honest young man; he has delighted us. It appears Gladstone talks all the time about *Treasure Island;* he would do better to attend to the imperial affairs of England. We shall tell you nothing of what we think of S.'s picture, for the excellent reason that we prefer to hear from you. It is a lovely frosty morning.

Why I have never spoken of my father's appearances * I cannot think. I was working so very hard that I had little time to remember anything. I thought both good; but the reference to Grant admirable. I would have changed nothing.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*December*, 1884]

Dear Lad,—I have made up my mind about the P.M.G., and send you a copy, which please keep or return. As for not giving a reduction, what are we? Are we artists or city men? Why do we sneer at stockbrokers? O nary; I will not take the £40. I took that as a fair price for my best work; I was not able to produce my best; and I will be damned if I steal with my eyes open. *Sufficit.* This is my look-out. As for the paper being rich, certainly it is; but I am honourable. It is no more above me in money than the poor slaveys and cads from whom I look for honesty are below me. Am I Pepys, that because I can find the countenance of "some of our ablest merchants," that because—— and——pour forth languid twaddle and get paid for it, I, too, should "cheerfully continue to steal"? I am not Pepys. I do not live much to God and honour;

* As President of the Royal Society.

but I will not wilfully turn my back on both. I am, like all the rest of us, falling ever lower from the bright ideas I began with, falling into greed, into idleness, into middle-aged and slippered fireside cowardice; but is it you, my bold blade, that I hear crying this sordid and rank twaddle in my ear? Preaching the dankest Grundyism and upholding the rank customs of our trade —you who are so cruel hard upon the customs of the publishers? O man, look at the Beam in our own Eyes; and whatever else you do, do not plead Satan's cause, or plead it for all; either embrace the bad, or respect the good when you see a poor devil trying for it. If this is the honesty of authors—to take what you can get and console yourself because publishers are rich—take my name from the rolls of that association. 'Tis a caucus of weaker thieves, jealous of the stronger.—Ever yours,

THE ROARING R. L. S.

You will see from the enclosed that I have stuck to what I think my dues pretty tightly in spite of this flourish: these are my words for a poor ten-pound note!

To MISS FERRIER

This refers to the death of Sir Alexander Grant, the distinguished Aristotelian scholar and Principal of Edinburgh University, married to Susan, second daughter of Professor J. F. Ferrier of St. Andrews.

[*Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Dec.*, 1884]

MY DEAR COGGIE,—We are very much distressed to hear of this which has befallen your family. As for Sir Alexander, I can but speak from my own feelings: he survived to finish his book and to conduct, with such a great success, the tercentenary. Ah, how many die just upon the threshold! Had he died a year ago, how great a disappointment! But all this is nothing to the survivors. Do please, as soon as you are able,

let us know how it goes and *how it is likely to go* with the family; and believe that both my wife and I are most anxious to have good news, or the best possible. My poor Coggie, I know very well how you must feel; you are passing a bad time.

Our news must seem very impertinent. We have both been ill; I, pretty bad, my wife, pretty well down; but I, at least, am better. The Bogue, who is let out every night for half an hour's yapping, is anchored in the moonlight just before the door, and, under the belief that he is watch-dog at a lone farm beleaguered by moss-troopers, is simply raising Cain.

I can add nothing more, but just that we wish to hear as soon as you have nothing else to do—not to hurry, of course,—if it takes three months, no matter —but bear us in mind.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*Winter*, 1884]

My dear Lad,—Here was I in bed; not writing, not hearing, and finding myself gently and agreeably ill used; and behold I learn you are bad yourself. Get your wife to send us a word how you are. I am better decidedly. Bogue got his Christmas card, and behaved well for three days after. It may interest the cynical to learn that I started my last hemorrhage by too sedulous attentions to my dear Bogue. The stick was broken; and that night Bogue, who was attracted by the extraordinary aching of his bones, and is always inclined to a serious view of his own ailments, announced with his customary pomp that he was dying. In this case, however, it was not the dog that died. (He had tried to bite his mother's ankles.) I have written a long and peculiarly solemn paper on the technical elements of style. It is pathbreaking and epoch-making; but I do not think the public will be readily convoked to its perusal. Did I tell you that S. C.

had risen to the paper on James? At last! O but I was pleased; he's (like Johnnie) been lang, lang o' comin', but here he is. He will not object to my future manœuvres in the same field, as he has to my former. All the family are here; my father better than I have seen him these two years; my mother the same as ever. I do trust you are better, and I am yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Henry Arthur Jones

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Dec. 30, 1884

Dear Sir,—I am so accustomed to hear nonsense spoken about all the arts, and the drama in particular, that I cannot refrain from saying "Thank you" for your paper. In my answer to Mr. James, in the December *Longman*, you may see that I have merely touched, I think in a parenthesis, on the drama; but I believe enough was said to indicate our agreement in essentials.

Wishing you power and health to further enunciate and to act upon these principles, believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson had begun with great eagerness to prepare material for a volume on the Duke of Wellington for the series of *English Worthies* published by Messrs. Longman and edited by Andrew Lang, but beyond preparation the scheme never went.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Jan. 4, 1885

Dear S. C.,—I am on my feet again, and getting on my boots to do the Iron Duke. Conceive my glee: I have refused the £100, and am to get some sort of royalty, not yet decided, instead. 'Tis for Longman's *English Worthies*, edited by A. Lang. Aw haw, haw!

Now, look here, could you get me a loan of the Despatches, or is that a dream? I should have to mark passages I fear, and certainly note pages on the fly. If you think it a dream, will Bain get me a second-hand copy, or who would? The sooner and cheaper I can get it the better. If there is anything in your weird library that bears on either the man or the period, put it in a mortar and fire it here instanter; I shall catch. I shall want, of course, an infinity of books: among which, any lives there may be; a life of the Marquis Marmont (the Maréchal), *Marmont's Memoirs, Greville's Memoirs, Peel's Memoirs, Napier,* that blind man's history of England you once lent me, Hamley's *Waterloo;* can you get me any of these? Thiers, idle Thiers also. Can you help a man getting into his boots for such a huge campaign? How are you? A Good New Year to you. I mean to have a good one, but on whose funds I cannot fancy: not mine leastways, as I am a mere derelict and drift beam-on to bankruptcy.

For God's sake, remember the man who set out for to conquer Arthur Wellesley, with a broken bellows and an empty pocket.—Yours ever,

R. L. Stevenson.

To Mr. Niles

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Hants, Jan. [6*th* 1885?]

Dear Mr. Niles,—I wrote to you on the occasion of the *Silverado Squatters* as near as possible to the following effect: that as it had pleased God to endow me with a sense of humour, I should never enter with you into the discussion of any points of business. I asked for no explanation, nor can I at all remember that any was offered. I cannot conceive that any explanation would affect the difference I regret to continue to observe in our views of these affairs.

From that date, I determined to offer you my books

only where it was convenient, and only on receipt of a proper sum for the advanced sheets. This plan is simple, very plain, not I think unjust to you and noticeably more profitable to myself than the one on which you seemed prepared to act.

I can remember entering into no engagement with you except one: that one I kept; you had, as I engaged, the *Silverado Squatters* for nothing, and I fail totally to see what engagement remains, or what "relationship" there is to be dissolved. I am not aware of any particular "disaffection"; I simply, as a man trying to live by his pen, prefer dealings in which I gain, to dealings in which I positively lose. I have exercised, and I beg you to believe that I will continue to exercise, my undoubted right to dispose of my own works to my own best advantage. I deplore the fact that you have lost by me; but I wish to point out to you in conclusion that that loss was neither caused nor accompanied by any gain to me. It was caused, I must suppose, by the difficulties of my literature, which I lament, and which I shall continue to do my best to remedy.

Am I to understand from the concluding paragraph of your letter that you wish to withdraw your offer for the sheets of *Otto?* I am not suggesting this; I shall carry out that bargain, on my side, with pleasure; but as your language is capable of being so understood I think it only fair that you should make your meaning explicit.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To THOMAS STEVENSON

Stevenson had been asked by his father to look over the proofs of a paper which the latter was about to read, as President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, "On the Principal Causes of Silting in Estuaries," in connection with the Manchester Ship Canal Scheme.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, 15th January, 1885

My dear Father,—I am glad you like the changes. I own I was pleased with my hand's darg; you may observe, I have corrected several errors which (you may tell Mr. Dick) he had allowed to pass his eagle eye; I wish there may be none in mine; at least, the order is better. The second title, "Some new Engineering Questions involved in the M.S.C. Scheme of last Session of P.," likes me the best. I think it is a very good paper; and I am vain enough to think I have materially helped to polish the diamond. I ended by feeling quite proud of the paper, as if it had been mine; the next time you have as good a one, I will overhaul it for the wages of feeling as clever as I did when I had managed to understand and helped to set it clear. I wonder if I anywhere misapprehended you? I rather think not at the last; at the first shot I know I missed a point or two. Some of what may appear to you to be wanton changes, a little study will show to be necessary.

Yes, Carlyle was ashamed of himself as few men have been; and let all carpers look at what he did. He prepared all these papers for publication with his own hand; all his wife's complaints, all the evidence of his own misconduct: who else would have done so much? Is repentance, which God accepts, to have no avail with men? nor even with the dead? I have heard too much against the thrawn, discomfortable dog: dead he is, and we may be glad of it; but he was a better man than most of us, no less patently than he was a worse. To fill the world with whining is against all my views: I do not like impiety. But—but—there are two sides to all things, and the old scalded baby had his noble side.—Ever affectionate son, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Perhaps not all readers of younger generations may be aware that in these days "the Grand Old Man" was the current slang

appellation of Mr. Gladstone, habitually shortened into "the G.O.M."

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, January, 1885

DEAR S. C.,—I have addressed a letter to the G.O.M. *à propos* of Wellington; and I became aware, you will be interested to hear, of an overwhelming respect for the old gentleman. I can *blaguer* his failures; but when you actually address him, and bring the two statures and records to confrontation, dismay is the result. By mere continuance of years, he must impose; the man who helped to rule England before I was conceived, strikes me with a new sense of greatness and antiquity, when I must actually beard him with the cold forms of correspondence. I shied at the necessity of calling him plain "Sir"! Had he been "My lord," I had been happier; no, I am no equalitarian. Honour to whom honour is due; and if to none, why, then, honour to the old!

These, O Slade Professor, are my unvarnished sentiments: I was a little surprised to find them so extreme, and therefore I communicate the fact.

Belabour thy brains, as to whom it would be well to question. I have a small space; I wish to make a popular book, nowhere obscure, nowhere, if it can be helped, unhuman. It seems to me the most hopeful plan to tell the tale, so far as may be, by anecdote. He did not die till so recently, there must be hundreds who remember him, and thousands who have still ungarnered stories. Dear man, to the breach! Up, soldier of the iron dook, up, Slades, and at 'em! (which, conclûsively, he did not say: the at-'em-ic theory is to be dismissed). You know piles of fellows who must reek with matter; help! help! I am going to try Happy-and-Glorious-long-to-reign-over-us. H. M. must remember things: and it is my belief, if my letter could be discreetly introduced, she would like to tell them. So I jest, when I don't address my mind to it: when I do, shall I be smit louting to my knee, as before the G.O.M.? *Problème!*—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

In the two following letters are expressed some of the distress and bitterness with which, in common with most Englishmen, Stevenson felt the circumstances of Gordon's abandonment in the Soudan and the failure of the belated attempt to rescue him. The advice to go on with "my book" refers, if I remember right, to some scheme for the republication in book form of stray magazine papers of mine of a more or less personal or biographical nature.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, February, 1885

My dear Colvin,—You are indeed a backward correspondent, and much may be said against you. But in this weather, and O dear! in this political scene of degradation, much must be forgiven. I fear England is dead of Burgessry and only walks about galvanised. I do not love to think of my countrymen these days: nor to remember myself. Why was I silent? I feel I have no right to blame any one; but I won't write to the G.O.M. I do really not see my way to any form of signature, unless "your fellow criminal in the eyes of God," which might disquiet the proprieties.

About your book, I have always said: go on. The drawing of character is a different thing from publishing the details of a private career. No one objects to the first, or should object, if his name be not put upon it; at the other, I draw the line. In a preface, if you chose, you might distinguish; it is, besides, a thing for which you are eminently well equipped, and which you would do with taste and incision. I long to see the book. People like themselves (to explain a little more); no one likes his life, which is a misbegotten issue, and a tale of failure. To see these failures either touched upon, or *coasted,* to get the idea of a spying eye and blabbing tongue about the house, is to lose all privacy in life. To see that thing, which we do love, our character, set forth, is ever gratifying. See how my *Talk and Talkers* went; everyone liked his own portrait, and shrieked about other people's; so it will be

with yours. If you are the least true to the essential, the sitter will be pleased; very likely not his friends, and that from *various motives.*

R. L. S.

When will your holiday be? I sent your letter to my wife, and forget. Keep us in mind, and I hope we shall be able to receive you.

To John Addington Symonds

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, February, 1885

My dear Symonds,—Yes, we have both been very neglectful. I had horrid luck, catching two thundering influenzas in August and November. I recovered from the last with difficulty, but have come through this blustering winter with some general success; in the house, up and down. My wife, however, has been painfully upset by my health. Last year, of course, was cruelly trying to her nerves; Nice and Hyères are bad experiences; and though she is not ill, the doctor tells me that prolonged anxiety may do her a real mischief.

I feel a little old and fagged, and chary of speech, and not very sure of spirit in my work; but considering what a year I have passed, and how I have twice sat on Charon's pierhead, I am surprising.

My father has presented us with a very pretty home in this place, into which we hope to move by May. My *Child's Verses* come out next week. *Otto* begins to appear in April; *More New Arabian Nights* as soon as possible. Moreover, I am neck deep in *Wellington;* also a story on the stocks, *The Great North Road.* O I am busy! Lloyd is at college in Edinburgh. That is, I think, all that can be said by way of news.

Have you read *Huckleberry Finn?* It contains many excellent things; above all, the whole story of a healthy boy's dealings with his conscience, incredibly well done.

My own conscience is badly seared; a want of piety; yet I pray for it, tacitly, every day; believing it, after the courage, the only gift worth having; and its want, in a man of any claims to honour, quite unpardonable. The tone of your letter seemed to me very sound. In these dark days of public dishonour, I do not know that one can do better than carry our private trials piously. What a picture is this of a nation! No man that I can see, on any side or party, seems to have the least sense of our ineffable shame: the desertion of the garrisons. I tell my little parable that Germany took England, and then there was an Indian Mutiny, and Bismarck said: "Quite right; let Delhi and Calcutta and Bombay fall; and let the women and children be treated Sepoy fashion," and people say "O, but that is very different!" And then I wish I were dead. Millais (I hear) was painting Gladstone when the news came of Gordon's death; Millais was much affected, and Gladstone said, "Why? *It is the man's own temerity!*" Voilà le Bourgeois! le voilà nu! but why should I blame Gladstone, when I too am a Bourgeois? when I have held my peace? Why did I hold my peace? Because I am a sceptic: *i.e.*, a Bourgeois. We believe in nothing, Symonds: you don't, and I don't; and these are two reasons, out of a handful of millions, why England stands before the world dripping with blood and daubed with dishonour. I will first try to take the beam out of my own eye, trusting that even private effort somehow betters and braces the general atmosphere. See, for example, if England has shown (I put it hypothetically) one spark of manly sensibility, they have been shamed into it by the spectacle of Gordon. Police-Officer Cole is the only man that I see to admire. I dedicate my *New Arabs* to him and Cox, in default of other great public characters.—Yours ever most affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Edmund Gosse

The following refers to an edition of Gray, with notes and a short prefatory Life by Mr. Gosse; and to the publication of the *Child's Garden of Verses*.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, March 12, 1885

My dear Gosse,—I was indeed much exercised how I could be worked into Gray; and lo! when I saw it, the passage seemed to have been written with a single eye to elucidate the—worst?—well, not a very good poem of Gray's. Your little life is excellent, clean, neat, efficient. I have read many of your notes, too, with pleasure. Your connection with Gray was a happy circumstance; it was a suitable conjunction.

I did not answer your letter from the States, for what was I to say? I liked getting it and reading it; I was rather flattered that you wrote it to me; and then I'll tell you what I did—I put it in the fire. Why? Well, just because it was very natural and expansive; and thinks I to myself, if I die one of these fine nights, this is just the letter that Gosse would not wish to go into the hands of third parties. Was I well inspired? And I did not answer it because you were in your high places, sailing with supreme dominion, and seeing life in a particular glory; and I was peddling in a corner, confined to the house, overwhelmed with necessary work, which I was not always doing well, and, in the very mild form in which the disease approaches me, touched with a sort of bustling cynicism. Why throw cold water? How ape your agreeable frame of mind? In short, I held my tongue.

I have now published on 101 small pages *The Complete Proof of Mr. R. L. Stevenson's Incapacity to Write Verse*, in a series of graduated examples with table of contents. I think I shall issue a companion volume of exercises: "Analyse this poem. Collect and comminate the ugly words. Distinguish and con-

demn the *chevilles*. State Mr. Stevenson's faults of taste in regard to the measure. What reasons can you gather from this example for your belief that Mr. S. is unable to write any other measure?"

They look ghastly in the cold light of print; but there is something nice in the little ragged regiment for all; the blackguards seem to me to smile, to have a kind of childish treble note that sounds in my ears freshly; not song, if you will, but a child's voice.

I was glad you enjoyed your visit to the States. Most Englishmen go there with a confirmed design of patronage, as they go to France for that matter; and patronage will not pay. Besides, in this year of—grace, said I?—of disgrace, who should creep so low as an Englishman? "It is not to be thought of that the flood"—ah, Wordsworth, you would change your note were you alive today!

I am now a beastly householder, but have not yet entered on my domain. When I do, the social revolution will probably cast me back upon my dung heap. There is a person called Hyndman whose eye is on me; his step is beHynd me as I go. I shall call my house Skerryvore when I get it: SKERRYVORE: *c'est bon pour la poéshie*. I will conclude with my favourite sentiment: "The world is too much with me."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
The Hermit of Skerryvore.

Author of "John Vane Tempest: a Romance," "Herbert and Henrietta: or the Nemesis of Sentiment," "The Life and Adventures of Colonel Bludyer Fortescue," "Happy Homes and Hairy Faces," "A Pound of Feathers and a Pound of Lead," part author of "Minn's Complete Capricious Correspondent: a Manual of Natty, Natural, and Knowing Letters," and editor of the "Poetical Remains of Samuel Burt Crabbe, known as the melodious Bottle-Holder."

Uniform with the above:

"The Life and Remains of the Reverend Jacob Degray Squah," author of "Heave-yo for the New Jerusalem," "A Box of Candles; or the Patent Spiritual Safety Match," and "A Day with the Heavenly Harriers."

To W. H. Low

The "dedication" referred to was that of a forthcoming illustrated edition of Keats's *Lamia*.

Bonaliie Towers, Bournemouth, March 13, 1885

My dear Low,—Your success has been immense. I wish your letter had come two days ago: *Otto*, alas! has been disposed of a good while ago; but it was only day before yesterday that I settled the new volumes of Arabs. However, for the future, you and the sons of the deified Scribner are the men for me. Really they have behaved most handsomely. I cannot lay my hand on the papers, or I would tell you exactly how it compares with my English bargain; but it compares well. Ah, if we had that copyright, I do believe it would go far to make me solvent, ill-health and all.

I wrote you a letter to the Rembrandt, in which I stated my views about the dedication in a very brief form. It will give me sincere pleasure, and will make the second dedication I have received, the other being from John Addington Symonds. It is a compliment I value much; I don't know any that I should prefer.

I am glad to hear you have windows to do; that is a fine business, I think; but, alas! the glass is so bad nowadays; realism invading even that, as well as the huge inferiority of our technical resource corrupting every tint. Still, anything that keeps a man to decoration is, in this age, good for the artist's spirit.

By the way, have you seen James and me on the novel? James, I think in the August or September—R. L. S. in the December *Longman*. I own I think the *école bête*, of which I am the champion, has the whip hand of the argument; but as James is to make a re-

joinder, I must not boast. Anyway the controversy is amusing to see. I was terribly tied down to space, which has made the end congested and dull. I shall see if I can afford to send you the April *Contemporary* —but I daresay you see it anyway—as it will contain a paper of mine on style, a sort of continuation of old arguments on art in which you have wagged a most effective tongue. It is a sort of start upon my Treatise on the Art of Literature: a small, arid book that shall some day appear.

With every good wish from me and mine (should I not say "she and hers"?) to you and yours, believe me yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To P. G. HAMERTON

The work of his correspondent's which R. L. S. notices in the following is the sumptuous volume *Landscape;* Seeley & Co., 1885. The passages specially referred to will be found pp. 46-62 of that work

Bournemouth, March 16, 1885

MY DEAR HAMERTON,—Various things have been reminding me of my misconduct: First, Swan's application for your address; second, a sight of the sheets of your *Landscape* book; and last, your note to Swan, which he was so kind as to forward. I trust you will never suppose me to be guilty of anything more serious than an idleness, partially excusable. My ill-health makes my rate of life heavier than I can well meet, and yet stops me from earning more. My conscience, sometimes perhaps too easily stifled, but still (for my time of life and the public manners of the age) fairly well alive, forces me to perpetual and almost endless transcriptions. On the back of all this, my correspondence hangs like a thundercloud; and just when I think I am getting through my troubles, crack, down goes my health, I have a long costly sickness, and begin the world again. It is fortunate for me I have a father,

or I should long ago have died; but the opportunity of the aid makes the necessity none the more welcome. My father has presented me with a beautiful house here —or so I believe, for I have not yet seen it, being a cage bird but for nocturnal sorties in the garden. I hope we shall soon move into it, and I tell myself that some day perhaps we may have the pleasure of seeing you as our guest. I trust at least that you will take me as I am, thoroughly bad correspondent, and a man, a hater, indeed, of rudeness in others, but too often rude in all unconsciousness himself; and that you will never cease to believe the sincere sympathy and admiration that I feel for you and for your work.

About the *Landscape,* which I had a glimpse of while a friend of mine was preparing a review, I was greatly interested, and could write and wrangle for a year on every page, one passage particularly delighted me, the part about Ulysses—jolly. Then, you know, that is just what I fear I have come to think landscape ought to be in literature; so there we should be at odds. Or perhaps not so much as I suppose, as Montaigne says it is a pot with two handles, and I own I am wedded to the technical handle, which (I likewise own and freely) you do well to keep for a mistress. I should much like to talk with you about some other points; it is only in talk that one gets to understand. Your delightful Wordsworth trap I have tried on two hardened Wordsworthians, not that I am not one myself. By covering up the context, and asking them to guess what the passage was, both (and both are very clever people, one a writer, one a painter) pronounced it a guide-book. "Do you think it an unusually good guide-book?" I asked, and both said, "No, not at all!" Their grimace was a picture when I showed the original.

I trust your health and that of Mrs. Hamerton keep better; your last account was a poor one. I was unable to make out the visit I had hoped, as (I do not know if you heard of it) I had a very violent and dangerous hemorrhage last spring. I am almost glad to have

seen death so close with all my wits about me, and not in the customary lassitude and disenchantment of disease. Even thus clearly beheld I find him not so terrible as we suppose. But, indeed, with the passing of years, the decay of strength, the loss of all my old active and pleasant habits, there grows more and more upon me that belief in the kindness of this scheme of things, and the goodness of our veiled God, which is an excellent and pacifying compensation. I trust, if your health continues to trouble you, you may find some of the same belief. But perhaps my fine discovery is a piece of art, and belongs to a character cowardly, intolerant of certain feelings, and apt to self-deception. I don't think so, however; and when I feel what a weak and fallible vessel I was thrust into this hurly-burly, and with what marvellous kindness the wind has been tempered to my frailties, I think I should be a strange kind of ass to feel anything but gratitude.

I do not know why I should inflict this talk upon you, but when I summon the rebellious pen, he must go his own way; I am no Michael Scott, to rule the fiend of correspondence. Most days he will none of me; and when he comes, it is to rape me where he will.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson was by this time beginning to realise that work at play-writing in collaboration with Mr. Henley was doing much more to exhaust his strength than to replenish either of their purses, and Mr. Henley, who had built hopes of fame and fortune on their collaboration, was very unwilling to face the fact.

[*Bournemouth, March,* 1885]

MY DEAR LAD,—That is all right, and a good job. About coming down, you cannot get into us for a while, as you may imagine; we are in desperate vortex, and

everybody 'most dead. I have been two days in bed with liver and slight bleeding.

Do you think you are right to send *Macaire* and the *Admiral* about? Not a copy have I sent, nor (speaking for myself personally) do I want sent. The reperusal of the *Admiral*, by the way, was a sore blow; eh, God, man, it is a low, black, dirty, blackguard, ragged piece: vomitable in many parts—simply vomitable. Pew is in places a reproach of both art and man. But of all that afterwards. What I mean is that I believe in playing dark with second and third-rate work. *Macaire* is a piece of job-work, hurriedly bockled; might have been worse, might have been better; happy-go-lucky; act it or-let-it-rot piece of business. Not a thing, I think, to send in presentations. Do not let us *gober* ourselves—and, above all, not *gober* dam pot-boilers —and p.b.'s with an obvious flaw and hole in them, such as is our unrealised Bertrand in this one. But of this also, on a meeting.

I am not yet done with my proofs. I am sorry to say; so soon as I am, I must tackle *Kidnapped* seriously, or be content to have no bread, which you would scarcely recommend. It is all I shall be able to do to wait for the *Young Folk* money, on which I'll have to live as best I can till the book comes in.

Plays at that rate I do not think I can possibly look at before July; so let that be a guide to you in your views. July, or August, or September, or thereabouts: these must be our times, whichever we attack. I think you had better suspend a visit till we can take you in and till I can speak. It seems a considerable waste of money; above all, as just now I could not even offer you meals with my woman in such a state of overwork. My father and mother have had to go to lodgings.—Post.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

[*Bournemouth, March,* 1885]

Dear Lad,—Much better, but rather unequal to do what I ought, a common complaint. The change of weather much helped me, not too soon.

I have thought as well as I could of what you said; and I come unhesitatingly to the opinion that the stage is only a lottery, must not be regarded as a trade, and must never be preferred to drudgery. If money comes from any play, let us regard it as a legacy, but never count upon it in our income for the year. In other words, I must go on and drudge at *Kidnapped,* which I hate, and am unfit to do; and you will have to get some journalism somehow. These are my cold and blighting sentiments. It is bad enough to have to live by an art—but to think to live by an art combined with commercial speculation—that way madness lies.

Time is our only friend. The *Admiral,* pulled simply in pieces and about half deleted, will act some day: such is my opinion. I can no more.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To William Archer

An anonymous review of the *Child's Garden,* appearing in March, gave R. L. S. so much pleasure that he wrote (in the four words, "Now who are you?") to inquire the name of its writer, and learned that it was Mr. Archer; with whom he had hitherto had no acquaintance. He thereupon entered into friendly correspondence with his critic.

Bournemouth, March 29, 1885

Dear Mr. Archer,—Yes, I have heard of you and read some of your work; but I am bound in particular to thank you for the notice of my verses. "There," I said, throwing it over to the friend who was staying with me, "it's worth writing a book to draw an article like that." Had you been as hard upon me as you

were amiable, I try to tell myself I should have been no blinder to the merits of your notice. For I saw there, to admire and to be very grateful for, a most sober, agile pen; an enviable touch; the marks of a reader, such as one imagines for one's self in dreams, thoughtful, critical, and kind; and to put the top on this memorial column, a greater readiness to describe the author criticised than to display the talents of his censor.

I am a man *blasé* to injudicious praise (though I hope some of it may be judicious too), but I have to thank you for THE BEST CRITICISM I EVER HAD; and am therefore, dear Mr. Archer, the most grateful critickee now extant. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I congratulate you on living in the corner of all London that I like best. *À propos*, you are very right about my voluntary aversion from the painful sides of life. My childhood was in reality a very mixed experience, full of fever, nightmare, insomnia, painful days and interminable nights; and I can speak with less authority of gardens than of that other "land of counterpane." But to what end should we renew these sorrows? The sufferings of life may be handled by the very greatest in their hours of insight; it is of its pleasures that our common poems should be formed; these are the experiences that we should seek to recall or to provoke; and I say with Thoreau, "What right have I to complain, who have not ceased to wonder?" and, to add a rider of my own, who have no remedy to offer.

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Penneli

Acknowledging the dedication of an illustrated *Canterbury Pilgrimage*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June*, 1885]

DEAR SIR AND MADAM,—This horrible delay must be forgiven me. It was not caused by any want of grati-

tude; but by the desire to acknowledge the dedication more suitably (and to display my wit) in a copy of verses. Well, now I give that up, and tell you in plain prose, that you have given me much pleasure by the dedication of your graceful book.

As I was writing the above, I received a visit from Lady Shelley, who mentioned to me that she was reading Mrs. Pennell's *Mary Wollstonecraft* with pleasure. It is odd how streams cross. Mr. Pennell's work I have, of course, long known and admired: and I believe there was once some talk, on the part of Mr. Gilder, that we should work together; but the scheme fell through from my rapacity; and since then has been finally rendered impossible (or so I fear) by my health.

I should say that when I received the *Pilgrimage*, I was in a state (not at all common with me) of depression; and the pleasant testimony that my work had not all been in vain did much to set me up again. You will therefore understand, late as is the hour, with what sincerity I am able to sign myself—Gratefully yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

MR. AND MRS. PENNELL,—I see I should explain that this is all in my own hand, I have not fobbed you off with an amanuensis; but as I have two hand-writings (both equally bad in these days) I might lead you to think so.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

On the death of Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who in Stevenson's early student days at Edinburgh had been both the warmest and the wisest of his elder friends (died June 12, 1885).

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1885]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—You know how much and for how long I have loved, respected, and admired him;

I am only able to feel a little with you. But I know how he would have wished us to feel. I never knew a better man, nor one to me more lovable; we shall all feel the loss more greatly as time goes on. It scarce seems life to me; what must it be to you? Yet one of the last things that he said to me was, that from all these sad bereavements of yours he had learned only more than ever to feel the goodness and what we, in our feebleness, call the support of God; he had been ripening so much—to other eyes than ours, we must suppose he was ripe, and try to feel it. I feel it is better not to say much more. It will be to me a great pride to write a notice of him: the last I can now do. What more in any way I can do for you, please to think and let me know. For his sake and for your own, I would not be a useless friend: I know, you know me a most warm one: please command me or my wife, in any way. Do not trouble to write to me; Austin, I have no doubt, will do so, if you are, as I fear you will be, unfit.

My heart is sore for you. At least you know what you have been to him; how he cherished and admired you; how he was never so pleased as when he spoke of you; with what a boy's love, up to the last, he loved you. This surely is a consolation. Yours is the cruel part—to survive; you must try and not grudge to him his better fortune, to go first. It is the sad part of such relations that one must remain and suffer; I cannot see my poor Jenkin without you. Nor you indeed without him; but you may try to rejoice that he is spared that extremity. Perhaps I (as I was so much his confidant) know even better than you can do what your loss would have been to him; he never spoke of you but his face changed: it was—you were—his religion.

I write by this post to Austin and to the *Academy*.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1885]

My dear Mrs. Jenkin,—I should have written sooner, but we are in a bustle, and I have been very tired, though still well. Your very kind note was most welcome to me. I shall be very much pleased to have you call me Louis, as he has now done for so many years. Sixteen, you say? is it so long? It seems too short now; but of that we cannot judge, and must not complain.

I wish that either I or my wife could do anything for you; when we can, you will, I am sure, command us.

I trust that my notice gave you as little pain as was possible. I found I had so much to say, that I preferred to keep it for another place and make but a note in the *Academy*. To try to draw my friend at greater length, and say what he was to me and his intimates, what a good influence in life and what an example, is a desire that grows upon me. It was strange, as I wrote the note, how his old tests and criticisms haunted me; and it reminded me afresh with every few words how much I owe to him.

I had a note from Henley, very brief and very sad. We none of us yet feel the loss; but we know what he would have said and wished.

Do you know that Dew Smith has two photographs of him, neither very bad? and one giving a lively, though not flattering air of him in conversation? If you have not got them, would you like me to write to Dew and ask him to give you proofs?

I was so pleased that he and my wife made friends; that is a great pleasure. We found and have preserved one fragment (the head) of the drawing he made and tore up when he was last here. He had promised to come and stay with us this summer. May we not hope, at least, some time soon to have one from you?—Be-

lieve me, my dear Mrs. Jenkin, with the most real sympathy, your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Dear me, what happiness I owe to both of you!

To C. HOWARD CARRINGTON

In answer to an inquiry from a correspondent not personally known to him, who had by some means heard of the *Great North Road* project.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June 9th [1885]

DEAR SIR,—*The Great North Road* is still unfinished; it is scarce I should say beyond Highgate: but it will be finished some day, bar the big accident. It will not however gratify your taste; the highwayman is not grasped: what you would have liked (and I, believe me) would have been *Jerry Abershaw:* but Jerry was not written at the fit moment; I have outgrown the taste—and his romantic horse-shoes clatter faintlier down the incline towards Lethe.—Truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Bournemouth, July 31, 1885

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—We are having great doings. The drawing-room will soon be lovely, and we bankrupt. It will be very quaint, but a very pleasing and harmonious room, and rich, too; and with the picture, a Great Spot altogether. The tricycle arrived here in delicate health, and has since boarded at the house of a perfidious tradesman; when we shall again behold it, the p.t. alone can say. I am very glad you have Mr. Bremmer with you; that will be a great comfort; please remember me to him kindly. If I were my mother, I should draw it mild with the Irish Cars. I don't believe they are good for her at all; or at least in excess.

Did you hear that I had given way to a convex mirror in the dining-room? It is sublime; no picture can be so decorative and cheerful. My mind shows symptoms, I think, of reawakening; high time, by George! Sargent comes to paint me again. Bob, Louisa, Portle, Lemon and Mrs. Lemon are down at Poole, where Coggie goes to-day to make room for Henley for two days.—I am,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. de Mattos

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Summer, 1885

My dear Katharine,—'Tis the most complete blague and folly to write to you; you never answer and, even when you do, your letters crackle under the teeth like ashes; containing nothing as they do but unseasonable japes and a great cloudy vagueness as of the realm of chaos. In this I know well they are like mine; and it becomes me well to write such—but not you—for reasons too obvious to mention. We have both been sick; but to-day I am up, though with an aching back. But I hope all will be better. Of your views, state, finances, etc., etc., I know nothing. We were mighty near the end of all things financially, when a strange shape of a hand giving appeared in Heaven or from Hell, and set us up again for the moment; yet still we totter on a whoreson brink. I beg pardon. I forgot I was writing to a lady; but the word shall stay: it is the only word; I would say it to the Q——n of E——d.

How do you like letters of this kind? It is your kind. They mean nothing; they are blankly insignificant; and impudently put one in the wrong. One has learnt nothing; and forsooth one must reply.—Yours, the Inexpressive Correspondent,

R. L. S.

Hey-ey-ey! Sold again. Hey-ey-ey!
Postscript: sold again.

To W. H. Low

In August of this year Stevenson made with his wife an excursion to the west country (stopping at Dorchester on the way, for the pleasure of seeing Mr. Thomas Hardy at home), and was detained for several weeks at Exeter by a bad fit of hemorrhage. His correspondence is not resumed until the autumn.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 22, 1885

My dear Low,—I trust you are not annoyed with me beyond forgiveness; for indeed my silence has been devilish prolonged. I can only tell you that I have been nearly six months (more than six) in a strange condition of collapse, when it was impossible to do any work, and difficult (more difficult than you would suppose) to write the merest note. I am now better, but not yet my own man in the way of brains, and in health only so-so. I suppose I shall learn (I begin to think I am learning) to fight this vast, vague featherbed of an obsession that now overlies and smothers me; but in the beginnings of these conflicts, the inexperienced wrestler is always worsted, and I own I have been quite extinct. I wish you to know, though it can be no excuse, that you are not the only one of my friends by many whom I have thus neglected; and even now, having come so very late into the possession of myself, with a substantial capital of debts, and my work still moving with a desperate slowness —as a child might fill a sandbag with its little handfuls—and my future deeply pledged, there is almost a touch of virtue in my borrowing these hours to write to you. Why I said "hours" I know not; it would look blue for both of us if I made good the word.

I was writing your address the other day, ordering a copy of my next, *Prince Otto,* to go your way. I hope you have not seen it in parts; it was not meant to be so read; and only my poverty (dishonourably) consented to the serial evolution.

I will send you with this a copy of the English edition of the *Child's Garden.* I have heard there is

some vile rule of the post-office in the States against inscriptions; so I send herewith a piece of doggerel which Mr. Bunner may, if he thinks fit, copy off the fly-leaf.

Sargent was down again and painted a portrait of me walking about in my own dining-room, in my own velveteen jacket, and twisting as I go my own moustache; at one corner a glimpse of my wife, in an Indian dress, and seated in a chair that was once my grandfather's—but since some months goes by the name of Henry James's, for it was there the novelist loved to sit—adds a touch of poesy and comicality. It is, I think, excellent, but is too eccentric to be exhibited. I am at one extreme corner; my wife, in this wild dress, and looking like a ghost, is at the extreme other end; between us an open door exhibits my palatial entrance hall and a part of my respected staircase. All this is touched in lovely, with that witty touch of Sargent's; but, of course, it looks dam queer as a whole.

Pray let me hear from you, and give me good news of yourself and your wife, to whom please remember me.—Yours most sincerely, my dear Low,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Prince Otto was published in October of this year; and the following refers to two reviews of it—one of them by Mr. Henley, which to the writer's displeasure had been pruned by the editor before printing; the other by a writer in the *Saturday Review* who declared that Otto was "a fool and a wittol," and could see nothing but false style in the story of Seraphina's flight through the forest.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Autumn,* 1885]

DEAR LAD,—If there was any more praise in what you wrote, I think [the editor] has done us both a service; some of it stops my throat. What, it would not have been the same if Dumas or Musset had done

it, would it not? Well, no, I do not think it would, do you know, now; I am really of opinion it would not; and a dam good job too. Why, think what Musset would have made of Otto! Think how gallantly Dumas would have carried his crowd through! And whatever you do, don't quarrel with ——. It gives me much pleasure to see your work there; I think you do yourself great justice in that field; and I would let no annoyance, petty or justifiable, debar me from such a market. I think you do good there. Whether (considering our intimate relations) you would not do better to refrain from reviewing me, I will leave to yourself: were it all on my side, you could foresee my answer; but there is your side also, where you must be the judge.

As for the *Saturday*. Otto is no "fool," the reader is left in no doubt as to whether or not Seraphina was a Messalina (though much it would matter, if you come to that); and therefore on both these points the reviewer has been unjust. Secondly, the romance lies precisely in the freeing of two spirits from these court intrigues; and here I think the reviewer showed himself dull. Lastly, if Otto's speech is offensive to him, he is one of the large class of unmanly and ungenerous dogs who arrogate and defile the name of manly. As for the passages quoted, I do confess that some of them reek Gongorically; they are excessive, but they are not inelegant after all. However, had he attacked me only there, he would have scored.

Your criticism on Gondremark is, I fancy, right. I thought all your criticisms were indeed; only your praise—chokes me.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To William Archer

The paper referred to in this and the following letters is one which Mr. Archer wrote over his own signature in the November number of *Time*, a magazine long since extinct.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885

Dear Mr. Archer,—I have read your paper with my customary admiration; it is very witty, very adroit; it contains a great deal that is excellently true (particularly the parts about my stories and the description of me as an artist in life); but you will not be surprised if I do not think it altogether just. It seems to me, in particular, that you have wilfully read all my works in terms of my earliest; my aim, even in style, has quite changed in the last six or seven years; and this I should have thought you would have noticed. Again, your first remark upon the affectation of the italic names; a practice only followed in my two affected little books of travel, where a typographical *minauderie* of the sort appeared to me in character; and what you say of it, then, is quite just. But why should you forget yourself and use these same italics as an index to my theology some pages further on? This is lightness of touch indeed; may I say, it is almost sharpness of practice?

Excuse these remarks. I have been on the whole much interested, and sometimes amused. Are you aware that the praiser of this "brave gymnasium" has not seen a canoe nor taken a long walk since '79? that he is rarely out of the house nowadays, and carries his arm in a sling? Can you imagine that he is a backslidden communist, and is sure he will go to hell (if there be such an excellent institution) for the luxury in which he lives? And can you believe that, though it is gaily expressed, the thought is hag and skeleton in every moment of vacuity or depression? Can you conceive how profoundly I am irritated by the opposite affectation to my own, when I see strong men and rich men bleating about their sorrows and the burthen of life, in a world full of "cancerous paupers," and poor sick children, and the fatally bereaved, ay, and down even to such happy creatures as myself, who has yet been obliged to strip himself, one after another, of all the pleasures that he had chosen except smoking

(and the days of that I know in my heart ought to be over), I forgot eating, which I still enjoy, and who sees the circle of impotence closing very slowly but quite steadily around him? In my view, one dank, dispirited word is harmful, a crime of *lèse-humanité*, a piece of acquired evil; every gay, every bright word or picture, like every pleasant air of music, is a piece of pleasure set afloat; the reader catches it, and, if he be healthy, goes on his way rejoicing, and it is the business of art so to send him, as often as possible.

For what you say, so kindly, so prettily, so precisely, of my style, I must in particular thank you; though even here, I am vexed you should not have remarked on my attempted change of manner: seemingly this attempt is still quite unsuccessful! Well, we shall fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.

And now for my last word: Mrs. Stevenson is very anxious that you should see me, and that she should see you, in the flesh. If you at all share in these views, I am a fixture. Write or telegraph (giving us time, however, to telegraph in reply, lest the day be impossible), and come down here to a bed and a dinner. What do you say, my dear critic? I shall be truly pleased to see you; and to explain at greater length what I meant by saying narrative was the most characteristic mood of literature, on which point I have great hopes I shall persuade you.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—My opinion about Thoreau, and the passage in *The Week*, is perhaps a fad, but it is sincere and stable. I am still of the same mind five years later; did you observe that I had said "modern" authors? and will you observe again that this passage touches the very joint of our division? It is one that appeals to me, deals with that part of life that I think the most important, and you, if I gather rightly, so much less so? You believe in the extreme moment of the facts that humanity has acquired and is acquiring; I think them

of moment, but still of much less than those inherent or inherited brute principles and laws that sit upon us (in the character of conscience) as heavy as a shirt of mail, and that (in the character of the affections and the airy spirit of pleasure) make all the light of our lives. The house is, indeed, a great thing, and should be rearranged on sanitary principles; but my heart and all my interest are with the dweller, that ancient of days and day-old infant man.

R. L. S.

An excellent touch is p. 584. "By instinct or design he eschews what demands constructive patience." I believe it is both; my theory is that literature must always be most at home in treating movement and change; hence I look for them.

To Thomas Stevenson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *October* 28, 1885

My dearest Father,—Get the November number of *Time*, and you will see a review of me by a very clever fellow, who is quite furious at bottom because I am too orthodox, just as Purcell was savage because I am not orthodox enough. I fall between two stools. It is odd, too, to see how this man thinks me a full-blooded fox-hunter, and tells me my philosophy would fail if I lost my health or had to give up exercise!

An illustrated *Treasure Island* will be out next month. I have had an early copy, and the French pictures are admirable. The artist has got his types up in Hogarth; he is full of fire and spirit, can draw and can compose, and has understood the book as I meant it, all but one or two little accidents, such as making the *Hispaniola* a brig. I would send you my copy, *but I cannot;* it is my new toy, and I cannot divorce myself from this enjoyment.

I am keeping really better, and have been out about

every second day, though the weather is cold and very wild.

I was delighted to hear you were keeping better; you and Archer would agree, more shame to you! (Archer is my pessimist critic.) Good-bye to all of you, with my best love. We had a dreadful overhauling of my conduct as a son the other night; and my wife stripped me of my illusions and made me admit I had been a detestable bad one. Of one thing in particular she convicted me in my own eyes: I mean, a most unkind reticence, which hung on me then, and I confess still hangs on me now, when I try to assure you that I do love you.—Ever your bad son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Henry James

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—At last, my wife being at a concert, and a story being done, I am at some liberty to write and give you of my views. And first, many thanks for the works that came to my sickbed. And second, and more important, as to the *Princess.** Well, I think you are going to do it this time; I cannot, of course, foresee, but these two first numbers seem to me picturesque and sound and full of lineament, and very much a new departure. As for your young lady, she is all there; yes, sir, you can do low life, I believe. The prison was excellent; it was of that nature of touch that I sometimes achingly miss from your former work: with some of the grime, that is, and some of the emphasis of skeleton there is in nature. I pray you to take grime in a good sense; it need not be ignoble; dirt may have dignity; in nature it usually has; and your prison was imposing.

And now to the main point; why do we not see you?

* *Princess Casamassima.*

Do not fail us. Make an alarming sacrifice, and let us see "Henry James's chair" properly occupied. I never sit in it myself (though it was my grandfather's); it has been consecrated to guests by your approval, and now stands at my elbow gaping. We have a new room, too, to introduce to you—our last baby, the drawing-room; it never cries, and has cut its teeth. Likewise, there is a cat now. It promises to be a monster of laziness and self-sufficiency.

Pray see, in the November *Time* (a dread name for a magazine of light reading), a very clever fellow, W. Archer, stating his views of me; the rosy-gilled "athletico-æsthete"; and warning me, in a fatherly manner, that a rheumatic fever would try my philosophy (as indeed it would), and that my gospel would not do for "those who are shut out from the exercise of any manly virtue save renunciation." To those who know that rickety and cloistered spectre, the real R. L. S., the paper, besides being clever in itself, presents rare elements of sport. The critical parts are in particular very bright and neat, and often excellently true. Get it by all manner of means.

I hear on all sides I am to be attacked as an immoral writer; this is painful. Have I at last got, like you, to the pitch of being attacked? 'Tis the consecration I lack—and could do without. Not that Archer's paper is an attack, or what either he or I, I believe, would call one; 'tis the attacks on my morality (which I had thought a gem of the first water) I referred to.

Now, my dear James, come—come—come. The spirit (that is me) says, Come; and the bride (and that is my wife) says, Come; and the best thing you can do for us and yourself and your work is to get up and do so right away.—Yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To William Archer

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *October* 30, 1885

Dear Mr. Archer,—It is possible my father may be soon down with me; he is an old man and in bad health and spirits; and I could neither leave him alone nor could we talk freely before him. If he should be here when you offer your visit, you will understand if I have to say no, and put you off.

I quite understand your not caring to refer to things of private knowledge. What still puzzles me is how you ("in the witness box"—ha! I like the phrase) should have made your argument actually hinge on a contention which the facts answered.

I am pleased to hear of the correctness of my guess. It is then as I supposed; you are of the school of the generous and not the sullen pessimists; and I can feel with you. I used myself to rage when I saw sick folk going by in their Bath-chairs; since I have been sick myself (and always when I was sick myself), I found life, even in its rough places, to have a property of easiness. That which we suffer ourselves has no longer the same air of monstrous injustice and wanton cruelty that suffering wears when we see it in the case of others. So we begin gradually to see that things are not black, but have their strange compensations; and when they draw towards their worst, the idea of death is like a bed to lie on. I should bear false witness if I did not declare life happy. And your wonderful statement that happiness tends to die out and misery to continue, which was what put me on the track of your frame of mind, is diagnostic of the happy man raging over the misery of others; it could never be written by the man who had tried what unhappiness was like. And at any rate, it was a slip of the pen: the ugliest word that science has to declare is a reserved indifference to happiness and misery in the individual; it declares no leaning towards the black, no

iniquity on the large scale in fate's doings, rather a marble equality, dread not cruel, giving and taking away and reconciling.

Why have I not written my *Timon?* Well, here is my worst quarrel with you. You take my young books as my last word. The tendency to try to say more has passed unperceived (my fault, that). And you make no allowance for the slowness with which a man finds and tries to learn his tools. I began with a neat brisk little style, and a sharp little knack of partial observation; I have tried to expand my means, but still I can only utter a part of what I wish to say, and am bound to feel; and much of it will die unspoken. But if I had the pen of Shakespeare, I have no *Timon* to give forth. I feel kindly to the powers that be; I marvel they should use me so well; and when I think of the case of others, I wonder too, but in another vein, whether they may not, whether they must not, be like me, still with some compensation, some delight. To have suffered, nay, to suffer, sets a keen edge on what remains of the agreeable. This is a great truth, and has to be learned in the fire.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

We expect you, remember that.

To William Archer

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, November 1, 1885

DEAR MR. ARCHER,—You will see that I had already had a sight of your article and what were my thoughts.

One thing in your letter puzzles me. Are you, too, not in the witness-box? And if you are, why take a wilfully false hypothesis? If you knew I was a chronic invalid, why say that my philosophy was unsuitable to such a case? My call for facts is not so general

as yours, but an essential fact should not be put the other way about.

The fact is, consciously or not, you doubt my honesty; you think I am making faces, and at heart disbelieve my utterances. And this I am disposed to think must spring from your having not had enough of pain, sorrow, and trouble in your existence. It is easy to have too much; easy also or possible to have too little; enough is required that a man may appreciate what elements of consolation and joy there are in everything but absolutely overpowering physical pain or disgrace, and how in almost all circumstances the human soul can play a fair part. You fear life, I fancy, on the principle of the hand of little employment. But perhaps my hypothesis is as unlike the truth as the one you chose. Well, if it be so, if you have had trials, sickness, the approach of death, the alienation of friends, poverty at the heels, and have not felt your soul turn round upon these things and spurn them under—you must be very differently made from me, and I earnestly believe from the majority of men. But at least you are in the right to wonder and complain.

To "say all"? Stay here. All at once? That would require a word from the pen of Gargantua. We say each particular thing as it comes up, and "with that sort of emphasis that for the time there seems to be no other." Words will not otherwise serve us; no, nor even Shakespeare, who could not have put *As You Like It* and *Timon* into one without ruinous loss both of emphasis and substance. Is it quite fair then to keep your face so steadily on my most light-hearted works, and then say I recognise no evil? Yet in the paper on Burns, for instance, I show myself alive to some sorts of evil. But then, perhaps, they are not your sorts.

And again: "to say all"? All: yes. Everything: no. The task were endless, the effect nil. But my all, in such a vast field as this of life, is what interests me, what stands out, what takes on itself a presence for my imagination or makes a figure in that little tricky

abbreviation which is the best that my reason can conceive. That I must treat, or I shall be fooling with my readers. That, and not the all of some one else.

And here we come to the division: not only do I believe that literature should give joy, but I see a universe, I suppose, eternally different from yours; a solemn, a terrible, but a very joyous and noble universe, where suffering is not at least wantonly inflicted, though it falls with dispassionate partiality, but where it may be and generally is nobly borne; where, above all (this I believe; probably you don't: I think he may, with cancer), *any brave man may make* out a life which shall be happy for himself, and, by so being, beneficent to those about him. And if he fails, why should I hear him weeping? I mean if I fail, why should I weep? Why should *you* hear *me?* Then to me morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions are, I will own frankly and sweepingly, so infinitely more important than the other parts of life, that I conceive men rather triflers who become immersed in the latter; and I will always think the man who keeps his lip stiff, and makes "a happy fireside clime," and carries a pleasant face about to friends and neighbours, infinitely greater (in the abstract) than an atrabilious Shakespeare or a backbiting Kant or Darwin. No offence to any of these gentlemen, two of whom probably (one for certain) came up to my standard.

And now enough said; it were hard if a poor man could not criticise another without having so much ink shed against him. But I shall still regret you should have written on an hypothesis you knew to be untenable, and that you should thus have made your paper, for those who do not know me, essentially unfair. The rich, fox-hunting squire speaks with one voice; the sick man of letters with another.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

(*Prometheus-Heine in minimis*)

P.S.—Here I go again. To me, the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents; they do not colour my view of life, as you would know, I think, if you had experience of sickness; they do not exist in my prospect; I would as soon drag them under the eyes of my readers as I would mention a pimple I might chance to have (saving your presence) on my posteriors. What does it prove? what does it change? it has not hurt, it has not changed me in any essential part; and I should think myself a trifler and in bad taste if I introduced the world to these unimportant privacies.

But, again, there is this mountain-range between us —*that you do not believe me*. It is not flattering, but the fault is probably in my literary art.

To W. H. Low

The "other thing coming out" mentioned below in the last paragraph but one was *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, December 26, 1885

My dear Low,—*Lamia* has not yet turned up, but your letter came to me this evening with a scent of the Boulevard Montparnasse that was irresistible. The sand of Lavenue's crumbled under my heel; and the bouquet of the old Fleury came back to me, and I remembered the day when I found a twenty franc piece under my fetish. Have you that fetish still? and has it brought you luck? I remembered, too, my first sight of you in a frock-coat and a smoking-cap, when we passed the evening at the Café de Medicis; and my last when we sat and talked in the Parc Monceau; and all these things made me feel a little young again, which, to one who has been mostly in bed for a month, was a vivifying change.

Yes, you are lucky to have a bag that holds you comfortably. Mine is a strange contrivance; I don't die, damme, and I can't get along on both feet to save

my soul; I am a chronic sickist; and my work cripples along between bed and the parlour, between the medicine bottle and the cupping glass. Well, I like my life all the same; and should like it none the worse if I could have another talk with you, though even my talks now are measured out to me by the minute hand like poisons in a minim glass.

A photograph will be taken of my ugly mug and sent to you for ulterior purposes: I have another thing coming out, which I did not put in the way of the Scribners, I can scarce tell how; but I was sick and penniless and rather back on the world, and mismanaged it. I trust they will forgive me.

I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Low's illness, and glad to hear of her recovery. I will announce the coming *Lamia* to Bob; he steams away at literature like smoke. I have a beautiful Bob on my walls, and a good Sargent, and a delightful Lemon; and your etching now hangs framed in the dining-room. So the arts surround me.—Yours, R. L. S.

To Mrs. de Mattos

With this cousin the writer had always been on terms of close affection, and he now dedicated to her *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In the dedication as published only the second verse stands.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *January* 1*st*, 1886

Dearest Katharine,—Here, on a very little book and accompanied with lame verses, I have put your name. Our kindness is now getting well on in years; it must be nearly of age; and it gets more valuable to me with every time I see you. It is not possible to express any sentiment, and it is not necessary to try, at least between us. You know very well that I love you dearly, and that I always will. I only wish the verses were better, but at least you like the story; and it is sent to you by the one that loves you—Jekyll, and not Hyde. R. L. S.

Ave!

Bells upon the city are ringing in the night;
High above the gardens are the houses full of light;
On the heathy Pentlands is the curlew flying free;
And the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.

We cannae break the bonds that God decreed to bind,
Still we'll be the children of the heather and the wind;
Far away from home, O, it's still for you and me
That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie!

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *Jan. 1st*, 1886

My dear Kinnicum,*—I am a very bad dog, but not for the first time. Your book, which is very interesting, came duly; and I immediately got a very bad cold indeed, and have been fit for nothing whatever. I am a bit better now, and aye on the mend; so I write to tell you, I thought of you on New Year's Day; though, I own, it would have been more decent if I had thought in time for you to get my letter then. Well, what can't be cured must be endured, Mr. Lawrie; and you must be content with what I give. If I wrote all the letters I ought to write, and at the proper time, I should be very good and very happy; but I doubt if I should do anything else.

I suppose you will be in town for the New Year; and I hope your health is pretty good. What you want is diet; but it is as much use to tell you that as it is to tell my father. And I quite admit a diet is a beastly thing. I doubt, however, if it be as bad as not being allowed to speak, which I have tried fully, and do not like. When, at the same time, I was not allowed to read, it passed a joke. But these are troubles of the past, and on this day, at least, it is proper to suppose

* Lothian vernacular pronunciation of Cunningham.

they won't return. But we are not put here to enjoy ourselves: it was not God's purpose; and I am prepared to argue, it is not our sincere wish. As for our deserts, the less said of them the better, for somebody might hear, and nobody cares to be laughed at. A good man is a very noble thing to see, but not to himself; what he seems to God is, fortunately, not our business; that is the domain of faith; and whether on the first of January or the thirty-first of December, faith is a good word to end on.

My dear Cummy, many happy returns to you and my best love.—The worst correspondent in the world,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *January 1st*, 1886

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—Many happy returns of the day to you all; I am fairly well and in good spirits; and much and hopefully occupied with dear Jenkin's life. The inquiry in every detail, every letter that I read, makes me think of him more nobly. I cannot imagine how I got his friendship; I did not deserve it. I believe the notice will be interesting and useful.

My father's last letter, owing to the use of a quill pen and the neglect of blotting-paper, was hopelessly illegible. Every one tried, and every one failed to decipher an important word on which the interest of one whole clause (and the letter consisted of two) depended.

I find I can make little more of this; but I'll spare the blots.—Dear people, ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

I will try again, being a giant refreshed by the house being empty. The presence of people is the great obstacle to letter-writing. I deny that letters should contain news (I mean mine; those of other people should). But mine should contain appropriate sentiments and

humorous nonsense, or nonsense without the humour. When the house is empty, the mind is seized with a desire—no, that is too strong—a willingness to pour forth unmitigated rot, which constitutes (in me) the true spirit of correspondence. When I have no remarks to offer (and nobody to offer them to), my pen flies, and you see the remarkable consequence of a page literally covered with words and genuinely devoid of sense. I can always do that, if quite alone, and I like doing it; but I have yet to learn that it is beloved by correspondents. The deuce of it is, that there is no end possible but the end of the paper; and as there is very little left of that—if I cannot stop writing—suppose you give up reading. It would all come to the same thing; and I think we should all be happier. . . .

To W. H. Low

In the following letter R. L. S. accepts the dedication of Mr. Low's illustrated edition of Keats's *Lamia*, and sends him in return the newly published *Jekyll and Hyde*, and a set of verses afterwards printed in the *Century Magazine* and *Underwoods*, and inscribed by Mr. St. Gaudens on his medallion portrait of the author. The terms of the *Lamia* dedication are as follows: "In testimony of loyal friendship and of a common faith in doubtful tales from Faery-Land, I dedicate to Robert Louis Stevenson my work in this book." The Latin legend inscribed above the design runs: "Neque est ullum certius amicitiae vinculum quam consensus et societas consiliorum et voluntatum."

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *Jan. 2nd*, 1886

My dear Low,—Lamia has come, and I do not know how to thank you, not only for the beautiful art of the designs, but for the handsome and apt words of the dedication. My favourite is "Bathes unseen," which is a masterpiece; and the next, "Into the green recessed woods," is perhaps more remarkable, though it does not take my fancy so imperiously. The night scene at Corinth pleases me also. The second part offers fewer opportunities. I own I should like to see both *Isabella*

and the *Eve* thus illustrated; and then there's *Hyperion* —O, yes, and *Endymion!* I should like to see the lot: beautiful pictures dance before me by hundreds: I believe *Endymion* would suit you best. It also is in faeryland; and I see a hundred opportunities, cloudy and flowery glories, things as delicate as the cobweb in the bush; actions, not in themselves of any mighty purport, but made for the pencil: the feast of Pan, Peona's isle, the "slabbed margin of a well," the chase of the butterfly, the nymph, Glaucus, Cybele, Sleep on his couch, a farrago of unconnected beauties. But I divagate; and all this sits in the bosom of the publisher.

What is more important, I accept the terms of the dedication with a frank heart, and the terms of your Latin legend fairly. The sight of your pictures has once more awakened me to my right mind; something may come of it, yet one more bold push to get free of this prisonyard of the abominably ugly, where I take my daily exercise with my contemporaries. I do not know, I have a feeling in my bones, a sentiment which may take on the forms of imagination, or may not. If it does, I shall owe it to you; and the thing will thus descend from Keats even if on the wrong side of the blanket. If it can be done in prose—that is the puzzle —I divagate again. Thank you again: you can draw and yet you do not love the ugly: what are you doing in this age? Flee, while it is yet time; they will have your four limbs pinned upon a stable door to scare witches. The ugly, my unhappy friend, is *de rigueur:* it is the only wear! What a chance you threw away with the serpent! Why had Apollonius no pimples? Heavens, my dear Low, you do not know your business. . . .

I send you herewith a Gothic gnome for your Greek nymph; but the gnome is interesting, I think, and he came out of a deep mine, where he guards the fountain of tears. It is not always the time to rejoice.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The gnome's name is *Jekyll & Hyde;* I believe you will find he is likewise quite willing to answer to the name of Low or Stevenson.

Same day.—I have copied out on the other sheet some bad verses, which somehow your picture suggested; as a kind of image of things that I pursue and cannot reach, and that you seem—no, not to have reached—but to have come a thought nearer to than I. This is the life we have chosen: well, the choice was mad, but I should make it again.

What occurs to me is this: perhaps they might be printed in (say) the *Century* for the sake of my name; and if that were possible, they might advertise your book. It might be headed as sent in acknowledgment of your *Lamia.* Or perhaps it might be introduced by the phrases I have marked above. I daresay they would stick it in: I want no payment, being well paid by *Lamia.* If they are not, keep them to yourself.

To Will H. Low

Damned bad lines in return for a beautiful book

Youth now flees on feathered foot.
Faint and fainter sounds the flute;
Rarer songs of Gods.

And still,
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream,
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits, but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
None can choose to stay at home,
All must follow—all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free;
Take the sun, and breaks the blue;—
Late, with stooping pinion flew

Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set
Shining foot on temple roof.
Now again she flies aloof,
Coasting mountain clouds, and kissed
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane
Still we pound and pant in vain;
Still with earthy foot we chase
Waning pinion, fainting face;
Still, with grey hair, we stumble on
Till—behold!—the vision gone!
Where has fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead!
[Life is gone, but life was gay:
We have come the primrose way!]*

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 2nd, 1886

My dear Gosse,—Thank you for your letter, so interesting to my vanity. There is a review in the *St. James's*, which, as it seems to hold somewhat of your opinions, and is besides written with a pen and not a poker, we think may possibly be yours. The *Prince*† has done fairly well in spite of the reviews, which have been bad; he was, as you doubtless saw, well slated in the *Saturday;* one paper received it as a child's story; another (picture my agony) described it as a "Gilbert comedy." It was amusing to see the race between me and Justin M'Carthy: the Milesian has won by a length.

That is the hard part of literature. You aim high, and you take longer over your work, and it will not be so

* In *Underwoods* the lines thus bracketed as doubtful stand with the change:

"Life is over; life was gay."

† *Prince Otto.*

successful as if you had aimed low and rushed it. What the public likes is work (of any kind) a little loosely executed; so long as it is a little wordy, a little slack, a little dim and knotless, the dear public likes it; it should (if possible) be a little dull into the bargain. I know that good work sometimes hits; but, with my hand on my heart, I think it is by an accident. And I know also that good work must succeed at last; but that is not the doing of the public; they are only shamed into silence or affectation. I do not write for the public; I do write for money, a nobler deity; and most of all for myself, not perhaps any more noble, but both more intelligent and nearer home.

Let us tell each other sad stories of the bestiality of the beast whom we feed. What he likes is the newspaper; and to me the press is the mouth of a sewer, where lying is professed as from an university chair, and everything prurient, and ignoble, and essentially dull, finds its abode and pulpit. I do not like mankind; but men, and not all of these—and fewer women. As for respecting the race, and, above all, that fatuous rabble of burgesses called "the public," God save me from such irreligion!—that way lies disgrace and dishonour. There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular.

This is perhaps a trifle stronger than my sedate and permanent opinion. Not much, I think. As for the art that we practise, I have never been able to see why its professors should be respected. They chose the primrose path; when they found it was not all primroses, but some of it brambly, and much of it uphill, they began to think and to speak of themselves as holy martyrs. But a man is never martyred in any honest sense in the pursuit of his pleasure; and *delirium tremens* has more of the honour of the cross. We were full of the pride of life, and chose, like prostitutes, to live by a pleasure. We should be paid if we give the pleasure we pretend to give; but why should we be honoured?

I hope some day you and Mrs. Gosse will come for a Sunday; but we must wait till I am able to see people. I am very full of Jenkin's life; it is painful, yet very pleasant, to dig into the past of a dead friend, and find him, at every spadeful, shine brighter. I own, as I read, I wonder more and more why he should have taken me to be a friend. He had many and obvious faults upon the face of him; the heart was pure gold. I feel it little pain to have lost him, for it is a loss in which I cannot believe; I take it, against reason, for an absence; if not to-day, then to-morrow, I still fancy I shall see him in the door; and then, now when I know him better, how glad a meeting! Yes, if I could believe in the immortality business, the world would indeed be too good to be true; but we were put here to do what service we can, for honour and not for hire: the sods cover us, and the worm that never dies, the conscience, sleeps well at last; these are the wages, besides what we receive so lavishly day by day; and they are enough for a man who knows his own frailty and sees all things in the proportion of reality. The soul of piety was killed long ago by that idea of reward. Nor is happiness, whether eternal or temporal, the reward that mankind seeks. Happinesses are but his wayside campings; his soul is in the journey; he was born for the struggle, and only tastes his life in effort and on the condition that he is opposed. How, then, is such a creature, so fiery, so pugnacious, so made up of discontent and aspiration, and such noble and uneasy passions—how can he be rewarded but by rest? I would not say it aloud; for man's cherished belief is that he loves that happiness which he continually spurns and passes by; and this belief in some ulterior happiness exactly fits him. He does not require to stop and taste it; he can be about the rugged and bitter business where his heart lies; and yet he can tell himself this fairy tale of an eternal tea-party, and enjoy the notion that he is both himself and something else; and that his friends will yet meet him, all ironed out and emascu-

late, and still be lovable,—as if love did not live in the faults of the beloved only, and draw its breath in an unbroken round of forgiveness! But the truth is, we must fight until we die: and when we die there can be no quiet for mankind but complete resumption into—what?—God, let us say—when all these desperate tricks will lie spellbound at last.

Here came my dinner and cut this sermon short—*excusez*.

R. L. S.

To James Payn

The late Mrs. Buckle, a daughter of Mr. James Payn, married to the editor of the *Times*, had laughingly remonstrated, through her father, on recognising some features of her own house in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, in the description of that tenanted by the fair Cuban in the section of Stevenson's *Dynamiter* which tells the story of the Brown Box.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 2nd, 1886

Dear James Payn,—Your very kind letter came very welcome; and still more welcome the news that you see ——'s tale. I will now tell you (and it was very good and very wise of me not to tell it before) that he is one of the most unlucky men I know, having put all his money into a pharmacy at Hyères, when the cholera (certainly not his fault) swept away his customers in a body. Thus you can imagine the pleasure I have to announce to him a spark of hope, for he sits to-day in his pharmacy, doing nothing and taking nothing, and watching his debts inexorably mount up.

To pass to other matters: your hand, you are perhaps aware, is not one of those that can be read running; and the name of your daughter remains for me undecipherable. I call her, then, your daughter—and a very good name too—and I beg to explain how it came about that I took her house. The hospital was a point in my tale; but there is a house on each side. Now the true house is the one before the hospital: is that No. 11? If not, what do you complain of? If it

is, how can I help what is true? Everything in the *Dynamiter* is not true; but the story of the Brown Box is, in almost every particular; I lay my hand on my heart and swear to it. It took place in that house in 1884; and if your daughter was in that house at the time, all I can say is she must have kept very bad society.

But I see you coming. Perhaps your daughter's house has not a balcony at the back? I cannot answer for that; I only know that side of Queen Square from the pavement and the back windows of Brunswick Row. Thence I saw plenty of balconies (terraces rather); and if there is none to the particular house in question, it must have been so arranged to spite me.

I now come to the conclusion of this matter. I address three questions to your daughter:—

1st. Has her house the proper terrace?
2nd. Is it on the proper side of the hospital?
3rd. Was she there in the summer of 1884?

You see, I begin to fear that Mrs. Desborough may have deceived me on some trifling points, for she is not a lady of peddling exactitude. If this should prove to be so, I will give your daughter a proper certificate, and her house property will return to its original value.

Can man say more?—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I saw the other day that the Eternal had plagiarised from *Lost Sir Massingberd:* good again, sir! I wish he would plagiarise the death of Zero.

To W. H. Low

The late Sir Percy and Lady Shelley had in these days attached themselves warmly to R. L. S., and saw in his ways and character a living image of those of the poet, Sir Percy's father, as they imagined him.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth,
Jan. Somethingorother-th, 1886

MY DEAR LOW,—I send you two photographs: they are both done by Sir Percy Shelley, the poet's son, which may interest. The sitting down one is, I think, the best; but if they choose that, see that the little reflected light on the nose does not give me a turn-up; that would be tragic. Don't forget "Baronet" to Sir Percy's name.

We all think a heap of your book; and I am well pleased with my dedication.—Yours ever,

R. L. STEVENSON.

P.S.—À propos of the odd controversy about Shelley's nose: I have before me four photographs of myself, done by Shelley's son: my nose is hooked, not like the eagle, indeed, but like the accipitrine family in man; well, out of these four, only one marks the bend, one makes it straight, and one suggests a turn-up. This throws a flood of light on calumnious man—and the scandalmongering sun. For personally I cling to my curve. To continue the Shelley controversy: I have a look of him, all his sisters had noses like mine: Sir Percy has a marked hook; all the family had high cheek-bones like mine; what doubt, then, but that this turn-up (of which Jeaffreson accuses the poet, along with much other *fatras*) is the result of some accident similar to what has happened in my photographs by his son?

R. L. S.

To CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

"The lad" is Lloyd Osbourne, at this time a student at Edinburgh University. "Omond" is Mr. George William Thomas Omond, advocate and author.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 18*th,* 1886

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—I hear the lad has got into the Spec. and I write to thank you very warmly for the

part you have played. I only wish we were both going there together to-morrow night, and you would be in the secretary's place (that so well became you, sir) and I were to open a debate or harry you on "Private Business," and Omond perhaps to read us a few glowing pages on—the siege of Saragossa, was it? or the Battle of Saratoga? my memory fails me, but I have not forgotten a certain white charger that careered over the fields of incoherent fight with a prodigious consequence of laughter: have you? I wonder, has Omond?

Well, well, *perierunt,* but, I hope, *non imputantur.* We have had good fun.

Again thanking you sincerely, I remain, my dear Guthrie. your old comrade,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To THOMAS STEVENSON

Kidnapped had at this time just been taken up again, and Stevenson explains the course of the story to his father, who had taken the deepest interest in it since they visited together the scene of the Appin murder.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January* 25, 1886]

MY DEAR FATHER,—Many thanks for a letter quite like yourself. I quite agree with you, and had already planned a scene of religion in *Balfour;* the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge furnishes me with a catechist whom I shall try to make the man. I have another catechist, the blind, pistol-carrying highway robber, whom I have transferred from the Long Island to Mull. I find it a most picturesque period, and wonder Scott let it escape. The *Covenant* is lost on one of the Tarrans, and David is cast on Earraid, where (being from inland) he is nearly starved before he finds out the island is tidal; then he crosses Mull to Torosay, meeting the blind catechist by the way; then crosses Morven from Kinlochaline to Kin-

gairloch, where he stays the night with the good catechist; that is where I am; next day he is to be put ashore in Appin, and be present at Colin Campbell's death. To-day I rest, being a little run down. Strange how liable we are to brain fag in this scooty family! But as far as I have got, all but the last chapter, I think David is on his feet, and (to my mind) a far better story and far sounder at heart than *Treasure Island.*

I have no earthly news, living entirely in my story, and only coming out of it to play patience. The Shelleys are gone; the Taylors kinder than can be imagined. The other day, Lady Taylor drove over and called on me; she is a delightful old lady, and great fun. I mentioned a story about the Duchess of Wellington which I had heard Sir Henry tell; and though he was very tired, he looked it up and copied it out for me in his own hand.—Your most affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO DAVID A. STEVENSON, C.E.

The cousin to whom this letter is addressed had undertaken to prepare a map illustrating the course of the brig *Covenant* in the tale of *Kidnapped.*

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth,* 1886]

DEAR DAVIE,—On the small map please mark the course of a ship, in red, leaving Queensferry, going North about midway between the Orkneys and Shetlands, passing in near Cape Wrath, through the Minch, near in by Canna, round Coll and Tiree, close round their S. end and the S.W. end of Mull, where, close in by the S. side of Earraid, it is supposed to strike.

On the large map, a red line is to show the wanderings of my hero after his shipwreck. It must be sometimes dotted to show uncertainty; sometimes full. As thus, it begins on Earraid, he crosses at Low Water, and passes along the Ross and across Mull to Torosay:

line dotted across Mull. He then goes by water to Kinlochaline and by road to the shore of the Linnhe Loch, just above Gairloch: line full. He passes the Linnhe Loch to the S. corner of Loch Leven: wood of Lettermore on the advance beyond Rudha Bod Buithe—*not* at Rudha Mor: line still full. Thence along the hilltops to Duror: full. Thence up the S. side of the river Duror, and the N. side of the river Creran, and over Ben Maol Chalicum and across the Coe below Meannarclach: dotted. Thence round the *outside of the hilltops* above the Coe and then above Loch Leven to a place above Coalisnacoan: full. Thence along the hills on the S. bank of the river Leven: full till you get near its fountain. Wherefrom the line becomes dotted, and staggers up to Ben Alder. From Ben Alder full again, across Loch Ericht, and down its East side, and across the head of Loch Rannoch. My hero then takes the hills and turns the head waters of Glen Lyon, Glen Lochay and Glen Dochart; at such obvious points of his itinerary the lines might be full, and between dotted. The line (full again) descends Balquhidder from the top, turns down Strathire, strikes over Uam Var, hits Alan Water above Kippendaire, descends Alan Water to the Forth, along the N. bank of Forth to Stirling Bridge, and *by road* by Alloa, Clackmannan and Culross, till it issues from the map; for I fear we don't reach Limekilns; which we really should have done, for from that point my hero crosses the Firth to Cawiden, and thence to Queensferry. Terminus Malorum.

If room can be found all the places I have named might be named upon the map, except Glen Lyon, Glen Lochay, Glen Dochart, and the Duror and Creran Rivers and Rudha Bod Buithe, and Ben Maol Chalicum and Meannarclach. The improbability of the itinerary is not so great as it appears, for my hero was trying to escape—like all heroes.

My father is pretty well, better than for a long time, and I may say the same of myself. I send a piece of

advance with so much of the itinerary rudely shown.

It should be lettered "Sketch of the cruise of the Brig *Covenant*, and the probable course of David Balfour's Wanderings."

By which you will see that both my families have been robbed to give a name.

Your afft. cousin,
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Kippen and Balfour should be marked too as they are referred to in the text, & it should have been the Forth & not the Teith (as I falsely directed you) that was marked; but we had incidents, & changed our proposed itinerary.

To CHARLES WARREN STODDARD

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Feb. 13th, 1886

MY DEAR STODDARD,—I am a dreadful character; but, you see, I have at last taken pen in hand; how long I may hold it, God knows. This is already my sixth letter to-day, and I have many more waiting; my wrist gives me a jog on the subject of scrivener's cramp, which is not encouraging.

I gather you were a little down in the jaw when you wrote your last. I am as usual pretty cheerful, but not very strong. I stay in the house all winter, which is base; but, as you continue to see, the pen goes from time to time, though neither fast enough nor constantly enough to please me.

My wife is at Bath with my father and mother, and the interval of widowery explains my writing. Another person writing for you when you have done work is a great enemy to correspondence. To-day I feel out of health, and shan't work; and hence this so much overdue reply.

I was re-reading some of your *South Sea Idyls* the

other day: some of the chapters are very good indeed; some pages as good as they can be.

How does your class get along? If you like to touch on *Otto,* any day in a by-hour, you may tell them—as the author's last dying confession—that it is a strange example of the difficulty of being ideal in an age of realism; that the unpleasant giddy-mindedness, which spoils the book and often gives it a wanton air of unreality and juggling with air-bells, comes from unsteadiness of key; from the too great realism of some chapters and passages—some of which I have now spotted, others I dare say I shall never spot—which disprepares the imagination for the cast of the remainder.

Any story can be made *true* in its own key; any story can be made *false* by the choice of a wrong key of detail or style: *Otto* is made to reel like a drunken —I was going to say man, but let us substitute cipher —by the variations of the key. Have you observed that the famous problem of realism and idealism is one purely of detail? Have you seen my *Note on Realism* in Cassell's *Magazine of Art;* and *Elements of Style* in the *Contemporary;* and *Romance* and *Humble Apology* in *Longman's?* They are all in your line of business; let me know what you have not seen and I'll send 'em.

I am glad I brought the old house up to you. It was a pleasant old spot, and I remember you there, though still more dearly in your own strange den upon a hill in San Francisco; and one of the most San Francisco-y parts of San Francisco.

Good-bye, my dear fellow, and believe me your friend, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To EDMUND GOSSE

Concerning the payment which Mr. Gosse had procured him from an American magazine for the set of verses addressed to Mr. Low (see above, p. 279).

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Feb.* 17, 1886]

DEAR GOSSE,—Non, c'est honteux! for a set of shambling lines that don't know whether they're trochees or what they are, that you or any of the crafty ones would blush all over if you had so much as thought upon, all by yourselves, in the water-closet. But God knows, I am glad enough of five pounds; and this is almost as honest a way to get it as plain theft, so what should I care?—Ever yours, R. L. S.

To ——

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February 25, 1886

MY DEAR SIR,—I am gratified by your letter and wish to answer two points. First, as to a key, I conceive I could not make my allegory better, nay, that I could not fail to weaken it, if I tried. I have said my say as I was best able: others must look for what was meant: the allegorist is one, the commentator is another; I conceive they are two parts. Second, I would not for the world have you suppose the parodies in *Punch* are dictated by spite, or are taken in ill part. If it were only a little funnier, I should set down the parody of *Jekyll* to one of my own friends, and a great admirer of that particular book. These parodies do good to the books parodied; great good, sometimes; they are kindly meant, and the parodist has usually keenly enjoyed the book of which he sits down to make a fool. Anstey, for instance, I know to be much admired by the same friend to whom I have referred; he has helped Anstey as he has often helped me; yet I believe he has parodied us both. I write at so great length for it is always pleasant to remove a painful impression. What appears spite, both in reviews and parodies, is usually our humble human friend—stupidity. I have written some other slighter things in a more or less allegorical vein; but they have not yet been collected. I am glad you think the book may be useful, and remain truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I remember reading with pleasure *The Harvest of a Quiet Eye.*

To John Addington Symonds

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*Spring,* 1886]

My dear Symonds,—If we have lost touch, it is (I think) only in a material sense; a question of letters, not hearts. You will find a warm welcome at Skerryvore from both the light-keepers; and, indeed, we never tell ourselves one of our financial fairy tales, but a run to Davos is a prime feature. I am not changeable in friendship; and I think I can promise you you have a pair of trusty well-wishers and friends in Bournemouth: whether they write or not is but a small thing; the flag may not be waved, but it is there.

Jekyll is a dreadful thing, I own; but the only thing I feel dreadful about is that damned old business of the war in the members. This time it came out; I hope it will stay in, in future.

Raskolnikoff * is easily the greatest book I have read in ten years; I am glad you took to it. Many find it dull: Henry James could not finish it: all I can say is, it nearly finished me. It was like having an illness. James did not care for it because the character of Raskolnikoff was not objective; and at that I divined a great gulf between us, and, on further reflection, the existence of a certain impotence in many minds of to-day, which prevents them from living *in* a book or a character, and keeps them standing afar off, spectators of a puppet show. To such I suppose the book may seem empty in the centre; to the others it is a room, a house of life, into which they themselves enter, and are tortured and purified. The Juge d'Instruction I thought a wonderful, weird, touching, ingenious creation: the drunken father, and Sonia, and the student friend, and the un-

* The name of the hero in Dostoieffsky's *Le Crime et le Châtiment.*

circumscribed, protoplasmic humanity of Raskolnikoff, all upon a level that filled me with wonder: the execution also, superb in places. Another has been translated—*Humiliés et Offensés*. It is even more incoherent than *Le Crime et le Châtiment*, but breathes much of the same lovely goodness, and has passages of power. Dostoieffsky is a devil of a swell, to be sure. Have you heard that he became a stout, imperialist conservative? It is interesting to know. To something of that side, the balance leans with me also in view of the incoherency and incapacity of all. The old boyish idea of the march on Paradise being now out of season, and all plans and ideas that I hear debated being built on a superb indifference to the first principles of human character, a helpless desire to acquiesce in anything of which I know the worst assails me. Fundamental errors in human nature of two sorts stand on the skyline of all this modern world of aspirations. First, that it is happiness that men want; and second, that happiness consists of anything but an internal harmony. Men do not want, and I do not think they would accept, happiness; what they live for is rivalry, effort, success—the elements our friends wish to eliminate. And, on the other hand, happiness is a question of morality—or of immorality, there is no difference—and conviction. Gordon was happy in Khartoum, in his worst hours of danger and fatigue; Marat was happy, I suppose, in his ugliest frenzy; Marcus Aurelius was happy in the detested camp; Pepys was pretty happy, and I am pretty happy on the whole, because we both somewhat crowingly accepted a *via media*, both liked to attend to our affairs, and both had some success in managing the same. It is quite an open question whether Pepys and I ought to be happy; on the other hand, there is no doubt that Marat had better be unhappy. He was right (if he said it) that he was *la misère humaine*, cureless misery—unless perhaps by the gallows. Death is a great and gentle solvent; it has never had justice done it, no, not by Whit-

man. As for those crockery chimney-piece ornaments, the bourgeois (*quorum pars*), and their cowardly dislike of dying and killing, it is merely one symptom of a thousand how utterly they have got out of touch of life. Their dislike of capital punishment and their treatment of their domestic servants are for me the two flaunting emblems of their hollowness.

God knows where I am driving to. But here comes my lunch.

Which interruption, happily for you, seems to have stayed the issue. I have now nothing to say, that had formerly such a pressure of twaddle. Pray don't fail to come this summer. It will be a great disappointment, now it has been spoken of, if you do.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To F. W. H. MYERS

In reply to a paper of criticisms and questions concerning *Jekyll and Hyde*.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March 1st, 1886

MY DEAR SIR,—I know not how to thank you: this is as handsome as it is clever. With almost every word I agree—much of it I even knew before—much of it, I must confess, would never have been, if I had been able to do what I like, and lay the thing by for the matter of a year. But the wheels of Byles the Butcher drive exceedingly swiftly, and *Jekyll* was conceived, written, re-written, re-re-written, and printed inside ten weeks. Nothing but this white-hot haste would explain the gross error of Hyde's speech at Lanyon's. Your point about the specialised fiend is more subtle, but not less just: I had not seen it.—About the picture, I rather meant that Hyde had brought it himself; and Utterson's hypothesis of the gift (p. 42) an error.—The tidiness of the room, I thought, but I dare say my psychology is

here too ingenious to be sound, was due to the dread weariness and horror of the imprisonment. Something has to be done: he would tidy the room. But I dare say it is false.

I shall keep your paper; and if ever my works come to be collected, I will put my back into these suggestions. In the meanwhile, I do truly lack words in which to express my sense of gratitude for the trouble you have taken. The receipt of such a paper is more than a reward for my labours. I have read it with pleasure, and as I say, I hope to use it with profit.—Believe me, your most obliged,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

The following letter relates to a suggestion which Mr. Gilder, as editor of the *Century Magazine*, had already made in the Hyères time nearly three years previously, and had now lately revived, that Stevenson and his friend, Mr. W. H. Low, should make a joint excursion down the Saône and Rhone, the result to be a book written by R. L. S. and illustrated by Mr. Low. Considerations of health caused the plan to be promptly abandoned for the second time.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March,* 1886]

MY DEAR LOW,—This is the most enchanting picture. Now understand my state; I am really an invalid, but of a mysterious order. I might be a *malade imaginaire*, but for one too tangible symptom, my tendency to bleed from the lungs. If we could go (1*st*) We must have money enough to travel with *leisure and comfort* —especially the first. (2*nd*) You must be prepared for a comrade who would go to bed some part of every day and often stay silent. (3*rd*) You would have to play the part of a thoughtful courier, sparing me fatigue, looking out that my bed was warmed, etc. (4*th*) If you are very nervous, you must recollect a bad hemorrhage is always on the cards, with its concomitants of anxiety and horror for those who are beside me.

Do you blench? If so, let us say no more about it.

If you are still unafraid, and the money were forthcoming, I believe the trip might do me good, and I feel sure that, working together, we might produce a fine book. The Rhone is the river of Angels. I adore it: have adored it since I was twelve, and first saw it from the train.

Lastly, it would depend on how I keep from now on. I have stood the winter hitherto with some credit, but the dreadful weather still continues, and I cannot holloa till I am through the wood.

Subject to these numerous and gloomy provisos, I embrace the prospect with glorious feelings.

I write this from bed, snow pouring without, and no circumstance of pleasure except your letter. That, however, counts for much. I am glad you liked the doggerel: I have already had a liberal cheque, over which I licked my fingers with a sound conscience. I had not meant to make money by these stumbling feet, but if it comes, it is only too welcome in my handsome but impecunious house.

Let me know soon what is to be expected—as far as it does not hang by that inconstant quantity, my want of health. Remember me to Madame with the best thanks and wishes; and believe me your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To SIDNEY COLVIN

Written just before a visit to London; not, this time, as my guest at the British Museum, but to stay at an hotel in Fitzroy Square with his father, who was fast declining in health.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March,* 1886]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have been reading the Vth and VIth Aeneid—the latter for the first time—and am overpowered. That is one of the most astonishing pieces of literature, or rather it contains the best, I ever

met with. We are all damned small fry, and Virgil is one of the tops of human achievement; I never appreciated this; you should have a certain age to feel this; it is no book for boys, who grind under the lack of enterprise and dash, and pass ignorantly over miracles of performance that leave an old hoary-headed practitioner like me stricken down with admiration. Even as a boy, the Sibyl would have bust me; but I never read the VIth till I began it two days ago; it is all fresh and wonderful; do you envy me? If only I knew any Latin! if you had a decent edition with notes—many notes—I should like well to have it; mine is a damned Didot with not the ghost of a note, type that puts my eyes out, and (I suspect) no very splendid text—but there, the carnal feelings of the man who can't construe are probably parents to the suspicion.

My dear fellow, I would tenfold rather come to the Monument; but my father is an old man, and if I go to town, it shall be (this time) for his pleasure. He has many marks of age, some of childhood; I wish this knighthood business could come off, though even the talk of it has been already something, but the change (to my eyes) is thoroughly begun; and a very beautiful, simple, honourable, high-spirited and childlike (and childish) man is now in process of deserting us piecemeal. *Si quis piorum*—God knows, not that he was pious, but he did his hand's darg or tried to do it; and if not,—well, it is a melancholy business.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The first letter showing Stevenson's new interest in the technicalities of music.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March,* 1886]

My dear Mrs. Jenkin,—I try to tell myself it is good nature, but I know it is vanity that makes me write.

I have drafted the first part of Chapter VI, Fleeming and his friends, his influence on me, his views on religion and literature, his part at the Savile; it should boil down to about ten pages, and I really do think it admirably good. It has so much evoked Fleeming for myself that I found my conscience stirred just as it used to be after a serious talk with him: surely that means it is good? I had to write and tell you, being alone.

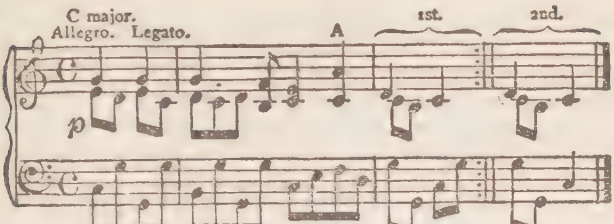
I have excellent news of Fanny, who is much better for the change. My father is still very yellow, and very old, and very weak, but yesterday he seemed happier, and smiled, and followed what was said; even laughed, I think. When he came away, he said to me, "Take care of yourself, my dearie," which had a strange sound of childish days, and will not leave my mind.

You must get Litolf's *Gavottes Célèbres:* I have made another trover there: a musette of Lully's. The second part of it I have not yet got the hang of; but the first —only a few bars! The gavotte is beautiful and pretty hard, I think, and very much of the period; and at the end of it, this musette enters with the most really thrilling effect of simple beauty. O—it's first-rate. I am quite mad over it. If you find other books containing Lully, Rameau, Martini, please let me know; also you might tell me, you who know Bach, where the easiest is to be found. I write all morning, come down, and never leave the piano till about five; write letters, dine, get down again about eight, and never leave the piano till I go to bed. This is a fine life.—Yours most sincerely,

R. L. S.

If you get the musette (Lully's), please tell me if I am right, and it was probably written for strings. Anyway, it is as neat as—as neat as Bach—on the piano; or seems so to my ignorance.

I play much of the Rigadoon; but it's strange, it don't come off *quite* so well with me!



There is the first part of the musette copied (from memory, so I hope there's nothing wrong). Is it not angelic? But it ought, of course, to have the gavotte before. The gavotte is in G, and ends on the keynote thus (if I remember):—

staccato, I think. Then you sail into the musette.

N.B.—Where I have put an "A," is that a dominant eleventh, or what? or just a seventh on the D? and if the latter, is that allowed? It sounds very funny. Never mind all my questions; if I begin about music (which is my leading ignorance and curiosity), I have always to babble questions: all my friends know me now, and take no notice whatever. The whole piece is marked allegro; but surely could easily be played too fast? The dignity must not be lost; the periwig feeling.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Apr., 1886

My dear People,—We are all on the mend, and mean soon to be quite well. Only I am about as bad in the head as last year, and David hangs on stays. I have been nearly teatotal; one grog at night, and nothing

else for four days. At first I thought it was going to do wonders; devil a bit; I am rather worse than before; teatotalism has been overrated, I believe, but doubtless it has its merits all the same. We have lovely, but cold weather, sharp frosts nightly, and the garden is kept in curl papers and looks as if a washing was out.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Written after his return from an excursion to Matlock with his father, following on their visit to London. "The verses" means *Underwoods*. The suppressed poem is that headed "To ——," afterwards printed in *Songs of Travel*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April,* 1886]

My dear Colvin,—This is to announce to you, what I believe should have been done sooner, that we are at Skerryvore. We were both tired, and I was fighting my second cold, so we came straight through by the west.

We have a butler! He doesn't buttle, but the point of the thing is the style. When Fanny gardens, he stands over her and looks genteel. He opens the door, and I am told waits at table. Well, what's the odds; I shall have it on my tomb—"He ran a butler."

He may have been this and that,
  A drunkard or a guttler;
He may have been bald and fat—
  At least he kept a butler.

He may have sprung from ill or well,
  From Emperor or sutler;
He may be burning now in Hell—
  On earth he kept a butler.

I want to tell you also that I have suppressed your poem. I shall send it you for yourself, and I hope you will agree with me that it was not good enough in point of view of merit, and a little too intimate as between you and me. I would not say less of you, my friend,

but I scarce care to say so much in public while we live. A man may stand on his own head; it is not fair to set his friend on a pedestal.

The verses are now at press; I have written a damn fine ballad.—And I am, dear S. C., ever yours,

TOMNODDY.

To THOMAS STEVENSON

Want of health preventing the author at this time from carrying the adventures of David Balfour, as narrated in *Kidnapped*, through to their issue as originally designed, it was resolved to wind them up for the present with the discomfiture of the wicked uncle, leaving open the possibility of a sequel, which was supplied six years later, in *Catriona*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April,* 1886]

MY DEAR FATHER,—The David problem has to-day been decided. I am to leave the door open for a sequel if the public take to it, and this will save me from butchering a lot of good material to no purpose. Your letter from Carlisle was pretty like yourself, sir, as I was pleased to see; the hand of Jekyll, not the hand of Hyde. I am for action quite unfit, and even a letter is beyond me; so pray take these scraps at a vast deal more than their intrinsic worth. I am in great spirits about David, Colvin agreeing with Henley, Fanny, and myself in thinking it far the most human of my labours hitherto. As to whether the long-eared British public may take to it, all think it more than doubtful; I wish they would, for I could do a second volume with ease and pleasure, and Colvin thinks it sin and folly to throw away David and Alan Breck upon so small a field as this one.—Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Matlock, April, 1886

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I must honestly say the place does not agree with me; I do not feel up to work and

to-day I can do absolutely nothing. How this should influence your plans I do not know; my father, I am sorry to say, gave me a full dose of Hyde this morning. He began about breakfast as usual; and then to prove himself in the right and that he did well to be angry, carried on a long time (obviously on purpose) about the moon. I was very severe with him, and refused to speak again till he was quiet; after which he admitted he had been silly; and yet when I, to let him down gently, took the thing humorously, he began to start it again. He is certainly hard to manage. I half thought he was looking worse; but I have applied to several people, who do not think so. This water cure is a rude amusement of a truth; I do not think he is strong enough to carry it to the extreme.

I believe the journey to Bonn would be very likely a good change for him. I am quite puzzled, however, and I confess with shame, a little out of spirits. But my father has one form of attack, that of accusing me of being down myself, for which I have found no answer, as it instantly justifies itself and sends me down to zero. I must say I am full of admiration for your courage and spirit. There is no objection to your coming, I think, from the point of view of his obedience, as he is quite under Charles's thumb. But what with my work which will not go, and the weather (or if not the weather, then the climate) which does not at all suit me, and (I suppose) the responsibility with my father, I have a somewhat blue view of Smedley, his abode, and wonder how you will stand it. If you come to-morrow, the brandy is nearly out. I suppose I am gloomy to-day because I could not sleep last night, and the dose of Hyde at breakfast finished me (Jekyll has been in the ascendant till now); but besides that, I begin to feel doubtfully about this whole hydropathic business; and I should like you to see him. He has only taken one glass of wine a day; but to-day I mean he shall have two. My poor bad Bogue* hangs, too, on my mind.

* One of the pet names of his Skye terrier.

How nice about Jowett's invitation! I wonder if Sam couldn't be asked too.—Your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Monroe

The next is in answer to criticisms on *Prince Otto* received from a lady correspondent in Chicago.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, May 25*th*, 1886

DEAR MISS MONROE,—(I hope I have this rightly) I must lose no time in thanking you for a letter singularly pleasant to receive. It may interest you to know that I read to the signature without suspecting my correspondent was a woman; though in one point (a reference to the Countess) I might have found a hint of the truth. You are not pleased with Otto; since I judge you do not like weakness; and no more do I. And yet I have more than tolerance for Otto, whose faults are the faults of weakness, but never of ignoble weakness, and who seeks before all to be both kind and just. Seeks, not succeeds. But what is man? So much of cynicism to recognise that nobody does right is the best equipment for those who do not wish to be cynics in good earnest. Think better of Otto, if my plea can influence you; and this I mean for your own sake—not his, poor fellow, as he will never learn your opinion; but for yours, because, as men go in this world (and women too), you will not go far wrong if you light upon so fine a fellow; and to light upon one and not perceive his merits is a calamity. In the flesh, of course, I mean; in the book the fault, of course, is with my stumbling pen. Seraphina made a mistake about her Otto; it begins to swim before me dimly that you may have some traits of Seraphina?

With true ingratitude you see me pitch upon your exception; but it is easier to defend oneself gracefully than to acknowledge praise. I am truly glad that you should like my books; for I think I see from what you

write that you are a reader worth convincing. Your name, if I have properly deciphered it, suggests that you may be also something of my countrywoman; for it is hard to see where Monroe came from, if not from Scotland. I seem to have here a double claim on your good nature: being myself pure Scotch and having appreciated your letter, make up two undeniable merits which, perhaps, if it should be quite without trouble, you might reward with your photograph.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Monroe

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1886]

MY DEAR MISS MONROE,—I am ill in bed and stupid, incoherently stupid; yet I have to answer your letter, and if the answer is incomprehensible you must forgive me. You say my letter caused you pleasure; I am sure, as it fell out, not near so much as yours has brought to me. The interest taken in an author is fragile: his next book, or your next year of culture, might see the interest frosted or outgrown; and himself, in spite of all, you might probably find the most distasteful person upon earth. My case is different. I have bad health, am often condemned to silence for days together—was so once for six weeks, so that my voice was awful to hear when I first used it, like the whisper of a shadow—have outlived all my chief pleasures, which were active and adventurous, and ran in the open air; and being a person who prefers life to art, and who knows it is a far finer thing to be in love, or to risk a danger, than to paint the finest picture or write the noblest book, I begin to regard what remains to me of my life as very shadowy. From a variety of reasons, I am ashamed to confess I was much in this humour when your letter came. I had a good many troubles; was regretting a high average of sins; had been recently reminded that I had outlived some friends, and

wondering if I had not outlived some friendships; and had just, while boasting of better health, been struck down again by my haunting enemy, an enemy who was exciting at first, but has now, by the iteration of his strokes, become merely annoying and inexpressibly irksome. Can you fancy that to a person drawing towards the elderly this sort of conjunction of circumstances brings a rather aching sense of the past and the future? Well, it was just then that your letter and your photograph were brought to me in bed; and there came to me at once the most agreeable sense of triumph. My books were still young; my words had their good health and could go about the world and make themselves welcome; and even (in a shadowy and distant sense) make something in the nature of friends for the sheer hulk that stays at home and bites his pen over the manuscripts. It amused me very much to remember that I had been in Chicago, not so many years ago, in my proper person; where I had failed to awaken much remark, except from the ticket collector; and to think how much more gallant and persuasive were the fellows that I now send instead of me, and how these are welcome in that quarter to the sitter of Herr Platz, while their author was not very welcome even in the villainous restaurant where he tried to eat a meal and rather failed.

And this leads me directly to a confession. The photograph which shall accompany this is not chosen as the most like, but the best-looking. Put yourself in my place, and you will call this pardonable. Even as it is, even putting forth a flattered presentment, I am a little pained; and very glad it is a photograph and not myself that has to go; for in this case, if it please you, you can tell yourself it is my image—and if it displeases you, you can lay the blame on the photographer; but in that, there were no hope, and the poor author might belie his labours.

Kidnapped should soon appear; I am afraid you may not like it, as it is very unlike *Prince Otto* in every

way; but I am myself a great admirer of the two chief characters, Alan and David. *Virginibus Puerisque* has never been issued in the States. I do not think it is a book that has much charm for publishers in any land; but I am to bring out a new edition in England shortly, a copy of which I must try to remember to send you. I say try to remember, because I have some superficial acquaintance with myself: and I have determined, after a galling discipline, to promise nothing more until the day of my death: at least, in this way, I shall no more break my word, and I must now try being churlish instead of being false.

I do not believe you to be the least like Seraphina. Your photograph has no trace of her, which somewhat relieves me, as I am a good deal afraid of Seraphinas —they do not always go into the woods and see the sunrise, and some are so well-mailed that even that experience would leave them unaffected and unsoftened. The "hair and eyes of several complexions" was a trait taken from myself; and I do not bind myself to the opinions of Sir John. In this case, perhaps—but no, if the peculiarity is shared by two such pleasant persons as you and I (as you and me—the grammatical nut is hard), it must be a very good thing indeed, and Sir John must be an ass.

The Book Reader notice was a strange jumble of fact and fancy. I wish you could have seen my father's old assistant and present partner when he heard my father described as an "inspector of lighthouses," for we are all very proud of the family achievements, and the name of my house here in Bournemouth is stolen from one of the sea-towers of the Hebrides which are our pyramids and monuments. I was never at Cambridge, again; but neglected a considerable succession of classes at Edinburgh. But to correct that friendly blunderer were to write an autobiography.—And so now, with many thinks, believe me yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Evidently written about the 10th of June, very soon after the decision of Mr. Gladstone to dissolve Parliament on the defeat of the Home Rule Bill (June 8). As to the *Travelling Companion*, see above, page 164.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1886]

My dear Colvin,—I am in bed again—bloodie jackery and be damned to it. Lloyd is better, I think; and money matters better; only my rascal carcase, and the muddy and oily lees of what was once my immortal soul, are in a poor and pitiful condition.

LITANY

Damn the political situation
" you
" me
and
" Gladstone.

I am a kind of dam home ruler, worse luck to it. I would support almost anything but that bill. How am I to vote? Great Cæsar's Ghost!—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

O! the *Travelling Companion* won't do; I am back on it entirely: it is a foul, gross, bitter, ugly daub, with lots of stuff in it, and no urbanity and no glee and no true tragedy—to the crows with it, a carrion tale! I will do no more carrion, I have done too much in this carrion epoch; I will now be clean; and by clean, I don't mean any folly about purity, but such things as a healthy man with his bowels open shall find fit to see and speak about without a pang of nausea.—I am, yours,

A Repentant Dankist.

The lakeists, the drainists, the brookists, and the riverites; let me be a brookist, *faute de mieux.*

I did enjoy myself in town, and was a thousandfold the better of it.

To Alison Cunningham

Accompanying a presentation copy of *Kidnapped*. Alison Cunningham's maiden name had been Hastie.

[*Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

My dear Cummy,—Herewith goes my new book, in which you will find some places that you know: I hope you will like it: I do. The name of the girl at Limekilns (as will appear if the sequel is ever written) was Hastie, and I conceive she was an ancestor of yours: as David was no doubt some kind of relative of mine.

I have no time for more, but send my love, and remembrance to your brother.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

During these months, as already indicated, Stevenson was very much taken up, in by-hours, with trying to learn something of the theory and practice of music, and spent much of his time "pickling," as he called it, in an elementary manner on the piano. He even tried his hand in an experimental way at composition, and had sent one of his attempts for criticism to his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, who was better versed in the art.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July, 1886

Sir,—Your foolish letter was unduly received. There may be hidden fifths, and if there are, it shows how dam spontaneous the thing was. I could tinker and tic-tac-toe on a piece of paper, but scorned the act with a Threnody, which was poured forth like blood and water on the groaning organ. If your heart (which was what I addressed) remained unmoved, let us refer to the affair no more: crystallised emotion, the statement and the reconciliation of the sorrows of the race and the individual, is obviously no more to you than

supping sawdust. Well, well. If ever I write another Threnody! My next op. will probably be a Passepied and fugue in G (or D).

The mind is in my case shrunk to the size and sp. gr. of an aged Spanish filbert. O, I am so jolly silly. I now pickle with some freedom (1) the refrain of *Martini's Moutons;* (2) *Sul margine d'un rio,* arranged for the infant school by the Aged Statesman; (3) the first phrase of Bach's musette (Sweet Englishwoman,* No. 3), the rest of the musette being one prolonged cropper, which I take daily for the benefit of my health. All my other works (of which there are many) are either arranged (by R. L. Stevenson) for the manly and melodious forefinger, or else prolonged and melancholy croppers. . . . I find one can get a notion of music very nicely. I have been pickling deeply in the Magic Flute; and have arranged *La dove prende,* almost to the end, for two melodious forefingers. I am next going to score the really nobler *Colomba o tortorella* for the same instruments.

This day is published
The works of Ludwig van Beethoven
arranged
and wiederdurchgearbeiteted
for two melodious forefingers
by,
Sir,—Your obedient servant,
PIMPERLY STIPPLE.

That's a good idea? There's a person called Lenz who actually does it—beware his den; I lost eighteen pennies on him, and found the bleeding corpses of pieces of music divorced from their keys, despoiled of their graces, and even changed in time; I do not wish to regard music (nor to be regarded) through that bony Lenz. You say you are "a spoon-fed idiot"; but how about Lenz? And how about me, sir, me?

* *Suite anglaise.*

I yesterday sent Lloyd by parcel post, at great expense, an empty matchbox and empty cigarette-paper book, a bell from a cat's collar, an iron kitchen spoon, and a piece of coal more than half the superficies of this sheet of paper. They are now (appropriately enough) speeding towards the Silly Isles; I hope he will find them useful. By that, and my telegram with prepaid answer to yourself, you may judge of my spiritual state. The finances have much brightened; and if *Kidnapped* keeps on as it has begun, I may be solvent. —Yours,

THRENODIÆ AVCTOR.
(The author of ane Threnodie)

Op. 2: Scherzo (in G Major) expressive of the Sense of favours to come.

To R. A. M. STEVENSON

Skerryvore [*Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

DEAR BOB,—Herewith another shy; more melancholy than before, but I think not so abjectly idiotic. The musical terms seem to be as good as in Beethoven, and that, after all, is the great affair. Bar the damn bareness of the bass, it looks like a piece of real music from a distance. I am proud to say it was not made one hand at a time; the bass was of synchronous birth with the treble; they are of the same age, sir, and may God have mercy on their souls!—Yours,

THE MAESTRO.

To MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Mr. and Mrs. T. Stevenson had been thinking of trying a winter at Bournemouth for the sake of being near their son, a plan which was eventually carried out. The health of the former was now fast and painfully breaking. Mr. J. W. Alexander, the well-known American artist, had been down at Skerryvore with an introduction from Mr. Gosse, and had made a drawing of Stevenson's head.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July 7th, 1886

My dear People,—It is probably my fault, and not yours, that I did not understand. I think it would be well worth trying the winter in Bournemouth; but I would only take the house by the month—this after mature discussion. My leakage still pursues its course; if I were only well, I have a notion to go north and get in (if I could) at the inn at Kirkmichael, which has always smiled upon me much. If I did well there, we might then meet and do what should most smile at the time.

Meanwhile, of course, I must not move, and am in a rancid box here, feeling the heat a great deal, and pretty tired of things. Alexander did a good thing of me at last; it looks like a mixture of an aztec idol, a lion, an Indian Rajah, and a woman; and certainly represents a mighty comic figure. F. and Lloyd both think it is the best thing that has been done of me up to now.

You should hear Lloyd on the penny whistle, and me on the piano! Dear powers, what a concerto! I now live entirely for the piano, he for the whistle; the neighbours, in a radius of a furlong and a half, are packing up in quest of brighter climes.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

P.S.—Please say if you can afford to let us have money for the trip, and if so, how much. I can see the year through without help, I believe, and supposing my health to keep up; but can scarce make this change on my own metal. R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

Dear Charles,—Doubtless, if all goes well, towards the 1st of August we shall be begging at your door. Thanks for a sight of the papers, which I return (you see) at once, fearing further responsibility.

Glad you like Dauvit; but eh, man, yon's terrible strange conduc' o' thon man Rankeillor. Ca' him a legal adviser! It would make a bonny law-shuit, the Shaws case; and yon paper they signed, I'm thinking, wouldnae be muckle thought o' by Puggy Deas.—Yours ever, R. L. S.

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

[*Presumably from Bournemouth,* 1886]

My dear Fellow,—*Send the thing to Jones and answer our questions.* Less reflection, more compliance, and your affairs will march more swiftly. It is not for you, but Jones, to understand it. I am very sorry about the money. Dreadful weather here; how is it with you? I trust you are better again. I am all at sea in my poor wits. I do not understand anything. —Ever your respected papa, R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

"Hecky" was a dog belonging to his correspondent's brother. Stevenson was always interested by his own retentiveness of memory for childish things, and here asks Cummy some questions to test the quality of hers.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

My dear Cummy,—I was sorry to get so poor account of you and Hecky. Fanny thinks perhaps it might be Hecky's teeth. Sir Walter Simpson has a very clever vet. I have forgotten his name; but if you like, I send a card and you or James might ask the address.

Now to what is more important. Do you remember any of the following names: Lady Boothroyd, Barny Gee, Andrew Silex, the steward, Carus Rearn, Peter Mangles, Richard Markham, Fiddler Dick? Please let me know and I will tell you how I come to ask. I warn you, you will have to cast back your eyes a good long way, close upon thirty years, before you strike the trail on which I wish to lead you.

When I have had an answer I will write you a decent letter. To-day, though nothing much is wrong with me, I am out of sorts and most disinclined for writing. —Yours most affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Written during one of his short stays as my guest at the British Museum. I remember his being invited to stay at Balliol by the Master and declining for fear of falling ill there, and should guess (I have not seen the letter) that "backed" is a misreading for some word meaning shirked or refused.

British Museum, June, 1886

DEAR FOLKS (Dear Young Folks),—Have seen le Henley, who seems depressed but proposes to come down next week. Have written and backed the Jowett business once and for all, and think I did right, so you need not worry how you are to get to Oxford, for you are not going. Colvin wants me to stay on till Monday. If I felt very well on Friday, and as if I was gaining ground, I should perhaps stay on if there was no objection in Skerryvore: Let me hear on this point. I am just getting over the journey, having slept practically all yesterday, and been but half awake to-day, with a headache in the morning, now happily departed. It was the headache made me shirk Chatto, to whom I go to-morrow without fail. My dearest people, I send you my love. R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*], *July* 6, 1886

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have not sent you any "advice" because I could find none to offer. We are all in a puddle ourselves; I have a beastly leaking which will not stop at any price, and as soon as it stops, I am under orders to go away, and can by no means fancy

where. I once half thought of coming to Scotland; indeed, it may end that way; but I should have to be better, or it would be worse both for my father and myself. I was terribly annoyed by this backslip just when I was feeling so well.

Mr. Alexander, a very pleasant, simple fellow and a first rate draughtsman, is here doing my portrait for the *Century Mag.* He has done a splendid head of Lloyd; mine as yet is not so successful; and Fanny's (also tried) is quite a failure. To-day he is ill and cannot work. I wonder if my father would sit to him; he knocks off these charcoal sketches in one or two hours, when he is in trim; the masterful head of Lloyd took about twenty minutes; and he is going to Edinburgh. If my father would sit, I believe we should have a chance of a really good thing.

I have nothing else to say, being grumpy and vague, and in a tiff with fate about this continual leaking. It is not bright, when it comes up, but there is a fair amount and it shows no sign of stopping. Weather very hot. Thermo. 104 yesterday in the sun, 87 in the shade: this with a smart breeze. The evenings are delightful. We are now a mighty musical household; I am learning to read music pretty fast; and Lloyd is just now ear-aching heaven with the penny whistle; an excellent thing, which keeps him well employed and in good spirits. I propose to get him a clarionet some day, and let him go at that; it will be more decent in result.

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

"Coolin," mentioned below, had been a favourite Skye terrier of Heriot Row days.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *July* 28, 1886

My dear Father,—We have decided not to come to Scotland, but just to do as Dobell wished, and take an

outing. I believe this is wiser in all ways; but I own it is a disappointment. I am weary of England; like Alan, "I weary for the heather," if not for the deer. Lloyd has gone to Scilly with Katharine and C., where and with whom he should have a good time. *David* seems really to be going to succeed, which is a pleasant prospect on all sides. I am, I believe, floated financially; a book that sells will be a pleasant novelty. I enclose another review; mighty complimentary, and calculated to sell the book too.

Coolin's tombstone has been got out, honest man! and it is to be polished, for it has got scratched, and have a touch of gilding in the letters, and be sunk in the front of the house. Worthy man, he, too, will maybe weary for the heather, and the bents of Gullane, where (as I dare say you remember) he gaed clean gyte, and jumped on to his crown from a gig, in hot and hopeless chase of many thousand rabbits. I can still hear the little cries of the honest fellow as he disappeared; and my mother will correct me, but I believe it was two days before he turned up again at North Berwick: to judge by his belly, he had caught not one out of these thousands, but he had had some exercise.

I keep well.—Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Anticipating the gift of a cupboard and answering the questions set in his last. The date of the readings had been his seventh year. Mr. Galpin was a partner in Cassell, Petter, Galpin, & Co.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July or August,* 1886]

My dear Cummy,—The cupboard has not yet turned up, and I was hanging on to be able to say it had. However, that is only a trick to escape another letter, and I should despise myself if I kept it up. It was truly kind of you, dear Cummy, to send it to us: and I will let you know where we set it and how it looks.

Carus Rearn and Andrew Silex and the others were from a story you read me in Cassell's *Family Paper*, and which I have been reading again and found by no means a bad story. Mr. Galpin lent me all the old volumes, and I mean to re-read *Custaloga* also, but have not yet. It was strangely like old times to read the other; don't you remember the poisoning with mushrooms? That was Andrew Silex.—Yours most affectionately, R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Having given up going to Scotland for a summer change, Stevenson had started on the "outing" which he mentions in the last letter. It took the shape of a ten days' visit to my house at the British Museum, followed by another made in the company of Mr. Henley to Paris, chiefly for the sake of seeing the W. H. Lows and the sculptor Rodin.

British Museum [*August 10th*, 1886]

My dear Mother,—We are having a capital holiday, and I am much better, and enjoying myself to the nines. Richmond is painting my portrait. To-day I lunch with him, and meet Burne-Jones; to-night Browning dines with us. That sounds rather lofty work, does it not? His path was paved with celebrities. To-morrow we leave for Paris, and next week, I suppose, or the week after, come home. Address here, as we may not reach Paris. I am really very well.—Ever your affectionate son, R. L. S.

To T. Watts-Dunton

Written after his return from London and Paris.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*September*, 1886]

Dear Mr. Watts,—The sight of the last *Athenæum* reminds me of you, and of my debt, now too long due. I wish to thank you for your notice of *Kidnapped;* and that not because it was kind, though for that also I

valued it, but in the same sense as I have thanked you before now for a hundred articles on a hundred different writers. A critic like you is one who fights the good fight, contending with stupidity, and I would fain hope not all in vain; in my own case, for instance, surely not in vain.

What you say of the two parts in *Kidnapped* was felt by no one more painfully than by myself. I began it partly as a lark, partly as a pot-boiler; and suddenly it moved, David and Alan stepped out from the canvas, and I found I was in another world. But there was the cursed beginning, and a cursed end must be appended; and our old friend Byles the butcher was plainly audible tapping at the back door. So it had to go into the world, one part (as it does seem to me) alive, one part merely galvanised: no work, only an essay. For a man of tentative method, and weak health, and a scarcity of private means, and not too much of that frugality which is the artist's proper virtue, the days of sinecures and patrons look very golden: the days of professional literature very hard. Yet I do not so far deceive myself as to think I should change my character by changing my epoch; the sum of virtue in our books is in a relation of equality to the sum of virtues in ourselves; and my *Kidnapped* was doomed, while still in the womb and while I was yet in the cradle, to be the thing it is.

And now to the more genial business of defence. You attack my fight on board the *Covenant:* I think it literal. David and Alan had every advantage on their side—position, arms, training, a good conscience; a handful of merchant sailors, not well led in the first attack, not led at all in the second, could only by an accident have taken the round-house by attack; and since the defenders had firearms and food, it is even doubtful if they could have been starved out. The only doubtful point with me is whether the seamen would have ever ventured on the second onslaught; I half believe they would not; still the illusion of numbers and

the authority of Hoseason would perhaps stretch far enough to justify the extremity.—I am, dear Mr. Watts, your very sincere admirer,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To ALISON CUNNINGHAM

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September, 1886

MY DEAR CUMMY,—I am home from a long holiday, vastly better in health. My wife not home yet, as she is being cured in some rather boisterous fashion by some Swedish doctors. I hope it may do her good, as the process seems not to be agreeable in itself.

Your cupboard has come, and it is most beautiful: it is certainly worth a lot of money, and is just what we have been looking for in all the shops for quite a while: so your present falls very pat. It is to go in our bedroom I think; but perhaps my wife will think it too much of a good thing to be put so much out of the way, so I shall not put it in its place till her return. I am so well that I am afraid to speak of it, being a coward as to boasting. I take walks in the wood daily, and have got back to my work after a long break. The story I wrote you about was one you read to me in Cassell's *Family Paper* long ago when it came out. It was astonishing how clearly I remembered it all, pictures, characters, and incidents, though the last were a little mixed and I had not the least the hang of the story. It was very pleasant to read it again, and remember old days, and the weekly excursion to Mrs. Hoggs after that precious journal. Dear me, lang syne now! God bless you, dear Cummy.—Your afft. boy,

R. L. STEVENSON.

To FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

Mr. Locker-Lampson (known before his second marriage as Frederick Locker), the friend of Tennyson and most accomplished writer of *vers de société* in his time, had through their

common friend Mr. Andrew Lang asked Stevenson for a set of verses, and he had sent the following—which were first printed, I believe, at the head of a very scarce volume:—"*Rowfant Rhymes*, by Frederick Locker, with an introduction by Austin Dobson. Cleveland, The Rowfant Club, 1895. 127 copies only printed."

Skerryvore, September 4, 1886

Not roses to the rose, I trow,
The thistle sends, nor to the bee
Do wasps bring honey. Wherefore now
Should Locker ask a verse from me?

Martial, perchance,—but he is dead,
And Herrick now must rhyme no more;
Still burning with the muse, they tread
(And arm in arm) the shadowy shore.

They, if they lived, with dainty hand,
To music as of mountain brooks,
Might bring you worthy words to stand
Unshamed, dear Locker, in your books.

But tho' these fathers of your race
Be gone before, yourself a sire,
To-day you see before your face
Your stalwart youngsters touch the lyre.

On these—on Lang or Dobson—call,
Long leaders of the songful feast.
They lend a verse your laughing fall—
A verse they owe you at the least.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

To Mr. Locker-Lampson's acknowledgment of these verses Stevenson replied as follows, asking his correspondent's interest on behalf of a friend who had been kind to him at Hyères, in procuring a nomination for her son to the Blue-Coat School.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September, 1886

Dear Locker,—You take my verses too kindly, but you will admit, for such a bluebottle of a versifier to

enter the house of Gertrude, where her necklace hangs, was not a little brave. Your kind invitation, I fear, must remain unaccepted; and yet—if I am very well—perhaps next spring—(for I mean to be very well)—my wife might. . . . But all that is in the clouds with my better health. And now look here: you are a rich man and know many people, therefore perhaps some of the Governors of Christ's Hospital. If you do, I know a most deserving case, in which I would (if I could) do anything. To approach you, in this way, is not decent; and you may therefore judge by my doing it, how near this matter lies to my heart. I enclose you a list of the Governors which I beg you to return, whether or not you shall be able to do anything to help me.

The boy's name is ——; he and his mother are very poor. It may interest you in her cause if I tell you this: that when I was dangerously ill at Hyères, this brave lady, who had then a sick husband of her own (since dead) and a house to keep and a family of four to cook for, all with her own hands, for they could afford no servant, yet took watch-about with my wife, and contributed not only to my comfort, but to my recovery in a degree that I am not able to limit. You can conceive how much I suffer from my impotence to help her, and indeed I have already shown myself a thankless friend. Let not my cry go up before you in vain!—Yours in hope,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

Mr. Locker-Lampson, apparently misunderstanding the application, had replied with a cheque.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September, 1886

MY DEAR LOCKER,—That I should call myself a man of letters, and land myself in such unfathomable ambiguities! No, my dear Locker, I did not want a cheque;

and in my ignorance of business, which is greater even than my ignorance of literature, I have taken the liberty of drawing a pen through the document and returning it; should this be against the laws of God or man, forgive me. All that I meant by my excessively disgusting reference to your material well-being was the vague notion that a man who is well off was sure to know a Governor of Christ's Hospital; though how I quite arrived at this conclusion I do not see. A man with a cold in the head does not necessarily know a rat-catcher; and the connection is equally close—as it now appears to my awakened and somewhat humbled spirit. For all that, let me thank you in the warmest manner for your friendly readiness to contribute. You say you have hopes of becoming a miser: I wish I had; but indeed I believe you deceive yourself, and are as far from it as ever. I wish I had any excuse to keep your cheque, for it is much more elegant to receive than to return; but I have my way of making it up to you, and I do sincerely beg you to write to the two Governors. This extraordinary outpouring of correspondence would (if you knew my habits) convince you of my great eagerness in this matter. I would promise gratitude; but I have made a promise to myself to make no more promises to anybody else, having broken such a host already, and come near breaking my heart in consequence; and as for gratitude, I am by nature a thankless dog, and was spoiled from a child up. But if you can help this lady in the matter of the Hospital, you will have helped the worthy. Let me continue to hope that I shall make out my visit in the spring, and believe me, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

It may amuse you to know that a very long while ago, I broke my heart to try to imitate your verses, and failed hopelessly. I saw some of the evidences the other day among my papers, and blushed to the heels.

R. L. S.

I give up finding out your name in the meantime, and keep to that by which you will be known—Frederick Locker.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *24th September,* 1886

My dear Locker,—You are simply an angel of light, and your two letters have gone to the post; I trust they will reach the hearts of the recipients—at least, that could not be more handsomely expressed. About the cheque: well now, I am going to keep it; but I assure you Mrs. —— has never asked me for money, and I would not dare to offer any till she did. For all that I shall stick to the cheque now, and act to that amount as your almoner. In this way I reward myself for the ambiguity of my epistolary style.

I suppose, if you please, you may say your verses are thin (would you so describe an arrow, by the way, and one that struck the gold? It scarce strikes me as exhaustively descriptive), and, thin or not, they are (and I have found them) inimitably elegant. I thank you again very sincerely for the generous trouble you have taken in this matter which was so near my heart, and you may be very certain it will be the fault of my health and not my inclination, if I do not see you before very long, for all that has past has made me in more than the official sense sincerely yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Auguste Rodin

Written after another visit to me in London, in November, which had been cut short by fogs. "Le Printemps" is Rodin's group so called.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth,
November or December, 1886

Mon cher Ami,—Il y a bien longtemps déjà que je vous dois des lettres par dizaines; mais bien que je

vais mieux, je ne vais toujours que doucement. Il a fallu faire le voyage à Bournemouth comme une fuite en Égypte, par crainte des brouillards qui me tuaient; et j'en ressentais beaucoup de fatigue. Mais maintenant cela commence à aller, et je puis vous donner de mes nouvelles.

Le Printemps est arrivé, mais il avait le bras cassé, et nous l'avons laissé, lors de notre fuite, aux soins d'un médecin-de-statues. Je l'attends de jour en jour; et ma maisonette en resplendira bientôt. Je regrette beaucoup le dédicace; peut-être, quand vous viendrez nous voir, ne serait-il pas trop tard de l'ajouter? Je n'en sais rien, je l'espère. L'œuvre c'est pour tout le monde; le dédicace est pour moi. L'œuvre est un cadeau trop beau même; c'est le mot d'amitié qui me le donne pour de bon. Je suis si bête que je m'embrouille, et me perds; mais vous me comprendrez, je pense.

Je ne puis même pas m'exprimer en Anglais; comment voudriez vous que je le pourrais en Français? Plus heureux que vous, le Némésis des arts ne me visite pas sous le masque du désenchantement; elle me suce l'intelligence et me laisse bayer aux corneilles, sans capacité mais sans regret; sans espérance, c'est vrai, mais aussi, Dieu merci, sans désespoir. Un doux étonnement me tient; je ne m'habitue pas à me trouver si buche, mais je m'y résigne; même si celà durait, ce ne serait pas désagréable—mais comme je mourrais certainement de faim, ce serait tout au moins regrettable pour moi et ma famille.

Je voudrais pouvoir vous écrire; mais ce n'est pas moi qui tiens la plume—c'est l'autre, le bête celui qui ne connaît pas le Français, celui qui n'aime pas mes amis comme je les aime, qui ne goûte pas aux choses de l'art comme j'y goûte; celui que je renie, mais auquel je commande toujours assez pour le faire prendre la plume en main et écrire des tristes bavardages. Celui-là, mon cher Rodin, vous ne l'aimez pas; vous ne devez jamais le connaître. Votre ami, qui dort à present, comme un ours, au plus profond de mon être, se réveillera sous peu.

Alors, il vous écrira de sa propre main. Attendez lui. L'autre ne compte pas; ce n'est qu'un secretaire infidèle et triste, à l'âme gelée, à la tête de bois.

Celui qui dort est toujours, mon cher ami, bien à vous; celui qui écrit est chargé de vous en faire part et de signer de la raison sociale.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON ET TRIPLE-BRUTE.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The following refers first, if I remember right, to some steps that were being taken to obtain recognition in the form of a knighthood for the elder Stevenson's public services; next, to the writer's own work at the time in hand; and lastly to my volume on Keats then in preparation for the *English Men of Letters* series.

Skerryvore, Dec. 14, 1886

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is first-rate of you, the Lord love you for it! I am truly much obliged. He—my father—is very changeable; at times, he seems only a slow quiet edition of himself; again, he will be very heavy and blank; but never so violent as last spring; and therefore, to my mind, better on the whole.

Fanny is pretty peepy; I am splendid. I have been writing much verse—quite the bard, in fact; and also a dam tale to order, which will be what it will be: I don't love it, but some of it is passable in its mouldy way, *The Misadventures of John Nicholson.* All my bardly exercises are in Scotch; I have struck my somewhat ponderous guitar in that tongue to no small extent: with what success, I know not, but I think it's better than my English verse; more marrow and fatness, and more ruggedness.

How goes *Keats?* Pray remark, if he (Keats) hung back from Shelley, it was not to be wondered at, *when so many of his friends were Shelley's pensioners.* I forget if you have made this point; it has been borne in upon me reading Dowden and the *Shelley Papers;* and it will do no harm if you have made it. I finished a

poem to-day, and writ 3,000 words of a story, *tant bien que mal;* and have a right to be sleepy, and (what is far nobler and rarer) am so.—My dear Colvin, ever yours,

THE REAL MACKAY.

To Lady Taylor

Stevenson's volume of tales, *The Merry Men*, so called from the story which heads the collection, was about to appear with a dedication to Lady Taylor. Professor Dowden's *Shelley* had lately come out, and had naturally been read with eager interest in a circle where Sir Percy (the poet's son) and Lady Shelley were intimate friends and neighbours.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*New Year*, 1887]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—This is to wish you all the salutations of the year, with some regret that I cannot offer them in person; yet less than I had supposed. For hitherto your flight to London seems to have worked well; and time flies and will soon bring you back again. Though time is ironical, too; and it would be like his irony if the same tide that brought you back carried me away. That would not be, at least, without some meeting.

I feel very sorry to think the book to which I have put your name will be no better, and I can make it no better. The tales are of all dates and places; they are like the box, the goose, and the cottage of the ferryman; and must go floating down time together as best they can. But I am after all a (superior) penny-a-liner; I must do, in the Scotch phrase, as it will do with me; and I cannot always choose what my books are to be, only seize the chance they offer to link my name to a friend's. I hope the lot of them (the tales) will look fairly disciplined when they are clapped in binding; but I fear they will be but an awkward squad. I have a mild wish that you at least would read them no further than the dedication.

I suppose we have all been reading Dowden. It seems to me a really first-rate book, full of justice, and

humour without which there can be no justice; and of fine intelligence besides. Here and there, perhaps a trifle precious, but this is to spy flaws in a fine work. I was weary at my resemblances to Shelley; I seem but a Shelley with less oil, and no genius; though I have had the fortune to live longer and (partly) to grow up. He was growing up. There is a manlier note in the last days; in spite of such really sickening aberrations as the Emillia Viviani business. I try to take a humorously-genial view of life; but Emillia Viviani, if I have her detested name aright,* is too much for my philosophy. I cannot smile when I see all these grown folk waltzing and piping the eye about an insubordinate and perfectly abominable schoolgirl, as silly and patently as false as Blanche Amory.† I really think it is one of those episodes that make the angels weep.

With all kind regards and affectionate good wishes to and for you and yours, believe me, your affectionate friend.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Lady Taylor

The reference in the last paragraph to a "vision" cannot be explained, his correspondent's daughters retaining no memory on the subject.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January,* 1887]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I don't know but what I agree fairly well with all you say, only I like *The Merry Men,* as a fantasia or vision of the sea, better than you do. The trouble with *Olalla* is that it somehow sounds false; and I think it must be this that gives you the feeling of irreverence. Of *Thrawn Janet,* which I like very much myself, you say nothing, thus uttering volumes; but it is plain that people cannot always agree. I do not think it is a wholesome part of me that broods

* As in fact he had, all except the double l.
† In *Pendennis.*

on the evil in the world and man; but I do not think that I get harm from it; possibly my readers may, which is more serious; but at any account, I do not purpose to write more in this vein. But the odd problem is: what makes a story true? *Markheim* is true; *Olalla* false; and I don't know why, nor did I feel it while I worked at them; indeed I had more inspiration with *Olalla*, as the style shows. I am glad you thought that young Spanish woman well dressed; I admire the style of it myself, more than is perhaps good for me; it is so solidly written. And that again brings back (almost with the voice of despair) my unanswerable: why is it false?

Here is a great deal about my works. I am in bed again; and my wife but so-so; and we have no news recently from Lloyd: and the cat is well; and we see, or I see, no one; so that other matters are all closed against me.

Your vision is strange indeed; but I see not how to use it; I fear I am earthly enough myself to regard it as a case of disease, but certainly it is a thrilling case to hear of.—Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To HENRY JAMES

This letter is written on the front page of a set of proofs of *Memories and Portraits*. The "silly Xmas story" is *The Misadventures of John Nicholson;* the "volume of verse" appeared later in the year as *Underwoods*. The signature refers to the two Scots poets of whom, "in his native speech," he considered himself the follower.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January, 1887

All the salutations!

MY DEAR JAMES,—I send you the first sheets of the new volume, all that has yet reached me, the rest shall follow in course. I am really a very fair sort of a fellow all things considered, have done some work; a

silly Xmas story (with some larks in it) which won't be out till I don't know when. I am also considering a volume of verse, much of which will be cast in my native speech, that very dark oracular medium: I suppose this is a folly, but what then? As the nurse says in Marryat, "It was only a little one."

My wife is peepy and dowie: two Scotch expressions with which I will leave you to wrestle unaided, as a preparation for my poetical works. She is a woman (as you know) not without art: the art of extracting the gloom of the eclipse from sunshine; and she has recently laboured in this field not without success or (as we used to say) not without a blessing. It is strange: "we fell out my wife and I" the other night; she tackled me savagely for being a canary-bird; replied (bleatingly) protesting that there was no use in turning life into King Lear; presently it was discovered that there were two dead combatants upon the field, each slain by an arrow of the truth, and we tenderly carried off each other's corpses. Here is a little comedy for Henry James to write! the beauty was each thought the other quite unscathed at first. But we had dealt shrewd stabs.

You say nothing of yourself, which I shall take to be good news. Archer's note has gone. He is, in truth, a very clever fellow that Archer, and I believe a good one. It is a pleasant thing to see a man who can use a pen; he can: really says what he means, and says it with a manner; comes into print like one at his ease, not shamefaced and wrong-foot-foremost like the bulk of us. Well, here is luck, and here are the kindest recollections from the canary-bird and from King Lear, from the Tragic Woman and the Flimsy Man.

Robert Ramsay Fergusson Stevenson.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

Stevenson suffered more even than usual after the turn of the year and during the spring of 1887, and for several months

his correspondence almost entirely fails. This is in reply to an invitation to Rowfant for Easter.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February 5th, 1887

MY DEAR LOCKER,—Here I am in my bed as usual, and it is indeed a long while since I went out to dinner. You do not know what a crazy fellow this is. My winter has not so far been luckily passed, and all hope of paying visits at Easter has vanished for twelve calendar months. But because I am a beastly and indurated invalid, I am not dead to human feelings; and I neither have forgotten you nor will forget you. Some day the wind may round to the right quarter and we may meet; till then I am still truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To HENRY JAMES

The volume of tales here mentioned is *The Merry Men;* that of essays, *Memories and Portraits;* that of verse, *Underwoods.*

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February,* 1887]

MY DEAR JAMES,—My health has played me it in once more in the absurdest fashion, and the creature who now addresses you is but a stringy and white-faced *bouilli* out of the pot of fever, with the devil to pay in every corner of his economy. I suppose (to judge by your letter) I need not send you these sheets, which came during my collapse by the rush. I am on the start with three volumes, that one of tales, a second one of essays, and one of—ahem—verse. This is a great order, is it not? After that I shall have empty lockers. All new work stands still; I was getting on well with *Jenkin* when this blessed malady unhorsed me, and sent me back to the dung-collecting trade of the re-publisher. I shall re-issue *Virg. Puer.* as vol. I. of *Essays,* and the new vol. as vol. II. of ditto; to be sold, however, separately. This is but a dry maundering; however, I am quite unfit—" I am for action quite unfit Either of exercise or wit." My father is in a variable

state; many sorrows and perplexities environ the house of Stevenson; my mother shoots north at this hour on business of a distinctly rancid character; my father (under my wife's tutorage) proceeds to-morrow to Salisbury; I remain here in my bed and whistle; in no quarter of heaven is anything encouraging apparent, except that the good Colvin comes to the hotel here on a visit. This dreary view of life is somewhat blackened by the fact that my head aches, which I always regard as a liberty on the part of the powers that be. This is also my first letter since my recovery. God speed your laudatory pen!

My wife joins in all warm messages.—Yours,

R. L. S.

To Auguste Rodin

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February, 1887

Mon cher Ami,—Je vous néglige, et cependant ce n'est véritablement pas de ma faute. J'ai fait encore une maladie; et je puis dire que l'ai royalement bien faite. Que celà vous aide à me pardonner. Certes je ne vous oublie pas; et je puis dire que je ne vous oublierai jamais. Si je n'écris pas, dîtes que je suis malade—c'est trop souvent vrai, dîtes que je suis las d'écrivailler—ce sera toujours vrai; mais ne dîtes pas, et ne pensez pas, que je deviens indifférent. J'ai devant moi votre portrait tiré d'un journal anglais (et encadré à mes frais), et je le regarde avec amitié, je le regarde même avec une certaine complaisance—dirai-je, de faux aloi? comme un certificat de jeunesse. Je me croyais trop vieux—au moins trop quarante-ans—pour faire de nouveaux amis; et quand je regards votre portrait, et quand je pense au plaisir de vous revoir, je sens que je m'étais trompé. Écrivez-moi donc un petit mot, pour me dire que vous me gardez pas rancune de mon silence, et que vous comptez bientôt venir en

Angleterre. Si vous tardez beaucoup, ce sera moi qui irai vous relancer.—Bien à vous, mon cher ami,

R. L. STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

Mr. Low and his wife, who were at this time leaving Paris for good, had been meditating a visit to the Stevensons at Bournemouth on their way home to the United States.

[*April*, 1887]

MY DEAR LOW,—The fares to London may be found in any continental Bradshaw or sich; from London to Bournemouth impoverished parties who can stoop to the third class get their ticket for the matter of 10s., or, as my wife loves to phrase it, "a half a pound." You will also be involved in a 3s. fare to get to Skerryvore; but this, I dare say, friends could help you in on your arrival; so that you may reserve your energies for the two tickets—costing the matter of a pound—and the usual gratuities to porters. This does not seem to me much: considering the intellectual pleasures that await you here, I call it dirt cheap. I *believe* the third class from Paris to London (*via* Dover) is *about* forty francs, but I cannot swear. Suppose it to be fifty.

	frcs.
$50 \times 2 = 100$	100
The expense of spirit or spontaneous lapse of coin on the journey, at 5 frcs. a head, $5 \times 2 = 10$	10
Victuals on ditto, at 5 frcs. a head, $5 \times 2 = 10$	10
Gratuity to stewardess, in case of severe prostration, at 3 francs	3
One night in London, on a modest footing, say 20	20
Two tickets to Bournemouth at 12·50, $12{\cdot}50 \times 2 = 25$	25
Porters and general devilment, say 5	5
Cabs in London, say 2 shillings, and in Bournemouth, 3 shillings = 5 shillings, 6 frcs. 25	6·25
frcs.	179·25

Or, the same in pounds, £7, 3s. 6½d.
Or, the same in dollars, $35.45,

if there be any arithmetical virtue in me. I have left out dinner in London in case you want to blow out, which would come extry, and with the aid of *rangs fangs* might easily double the whole amount—above all if you have a few friends to meet you.

In making this valuable project, or budget, I discovered for the first time a reason (frequently overlooked) for the singular costliness of travelling with your wife. Anybody would count the tickets double; but how few would have remembered—or indeed has any one ever remembered?—to count the spontaneous lapse of coin double also? Yet there are two of you, each must do his daily leakage, and it must be done out of your travelling fund. You will tell me, perhaps, that you carry the coin yourself: my dear sir, do you think you can fool your Maker? Your wife has to lose her quota; and by God she will—if you kept the coin in a belt. One thing I have omitted: you will lose a certain amount on the exchange, but this even I cannot foresee, as it is one of the few things that vary with the way a man has.—I am, dear sir, yours financially,

SAMUEL BUDGETT.

To Sidney Colvin

I had lately sent him two books, the fifth volume of Huxley's *Collected Essays* and Cotter Morison's *Service of Man;* the latter a work of Positivist tendency, on which its genial and accomplished author had long built strong hopes, but which unfortunately he only began to write after a rapid decline of health and power had set in.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Spring,* 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I read Huxley, and a lot of it with great interest. Eh, what a gulf between a man with a mind like Huxley and a man like Cotter Morison. Truly 'tis the book of a boy; before I was twenty I was done with all these considerations. Nor is there one happy phrase, except "the devastating flood of children." Why should he din our ears with languid

repetitions of the very first ideas and facts that a bright lad gets hold of; and how can a man be so destitute of historical perspective, so full of cheap outworn generalisations—feudal ages, time of suffering—*pas tant qu'aujourdhui*, M. Cotter! Christianity—which? what? how? You must not attack all forms, from Calvin to St. Thomas, from St. Thomas to (One who should surely be considered) Jesus Christ, with the same missiles: they do not all tell against all. But there it is, as we said; a man joins a sect, and becomes one-eyed. He affects a horror of vices which are just the thing to stop his "devastating flood of babies," and just the thing above all to keep the vicious from procreating. Where, then, is the ground of this horror in any intelligent Servant of Humanity? O, beware of creeds and anti-creeds, sects and anti-sects. There is but one truth, outside science, the truth that comes of an earnest, smiling survey of mankind "from China to Peru," or further, and from to-day to the days of Probably Arboreal; and the truth (however true it is) that robs you of sympathy with any form of thought or trait of man, is false for you, and heretical, and hereticoplastic. Hear Morison struggling with his chains; hear me, hear all of us, when we suffer our creeds or anti-creeds to degenerate towards the whine, and begin to hate our neighbours, or our ancestors, like ourselves. And yet in Morison, too, as in St. Thomas, as in Rutherford, ay, or in Peden, truth struggles, or it would not so deform them. The man has not a devil; it is an angel that tears and blinds him. But Morison's is an old, almost a venerable seraph, with whom I dealt before I was twenty, and had done with before I was twenty-five.

Behold how the voices of dead preachers speak hollowly (and lengthily) within me!—Yours ever—and rather better—not much,

R. L. S.

To Garrett Droppers

One day, as Professor Droppers was walking from the lecture room at Harvard with William James, there arose the question of the philosophical importance of Stevenson, who had, Professor Droppers said, "brought back the sense of adventure into life."

Professor James replied: "There is no critical estimate of Stevenson's influence that I know of. Why not write something on this?" As a result, there appeared in the *Harvard Monthly* for March, 1887, an estimate of the place and influence of Stevenson. Professor Droppers sent a copy of the article to Stevenson, together with a letter recounting an incident which happened in a Boston street car. Professor James had purchased an English edition of *Prince Otto*, and, on being chidden by Professor Droppers for his extravagance in not buying the cheaper American pirated edition, said: "Well, ordinarily when buying books I don't mind stealing, but I thought I wouldn't steal from Stevenson."

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April 5, 1887

Dear Mr. Droppers,—I should find it difficult to exaggerate the gratification I have received from your letter and article. The article is the work, I take it, of a young man; and I may discount something of its warmth upon that score. But I must say frankly, if you think too well of me, as I suppose you do, it is in the way of exaggerating my success, not of misunderstanding my aim and point of view. To you, at least, I seem to have conveyed my meaning; it is a pleasure to me to find myself understood, it will be a pleasure to you to hear that you have understood me.

Let me say one word about science. Had I lived in an age that was averse from science, I should have preached it in season and out of season. I came at a time when science was made much of, and had arrogated to itself a supremacy over all other branches of knowledge, and so I fell consistently foul of it. For all that, I would have no one neglect science; I read a lot of it myself and profited in a thousand ways. The great thing is to know as much science as your mind will stand without turning into a man of science (a common

professor), just as it is to know as much of the world as your heart will bear without your turning into a man of the world. In all these things there is an easy rule, which I believe infallible. As long as any study continues to add, pursue it; as soon as it begins to subtract, have done with it. We want to round out our globe of experience and sympathy on all sides; not to contract into the cube.

I preach away very glibly, because I am fond of preaching; but I am keenly aware that you are already, in all probability, better read and will soon, I daresay, be a better preacher than I. When that is so, you will not forget the pleasure I was able to give you, and the help you found, if you found any, in my books. It pleases me to hope that you did; and indeed there is a sense in which I am pleased with myself—for I have never been a writer for cowards, male or female, in the flesh. You see you have made me a little vain; yours is the fault. I was a *very* young man myself and I wish to address young men; so that a young man's—and a clever young man's—approval, took my approval, took my vanity in the softest point.

I was pleased to hear what you told me of the professor; national sins bind us with iron; I cannot help keeping an opium house as large as China (though indeed I am a sleeping partner) and some day I shall pay for it. It is difficult for Americans to avoid buying pirated books; but some day they will pay for that too. In the meantime it is I who pay for it; and what concerns me not a little, my very honest American publishers, the Messrs. Scribner. But I am quite aware of the Chinese beam in my eye, and lament the mote in my brother's decorously.

Let me hear of you again, or, if you come to Europe, let me see you.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—It is all in my own hand. I had to change my hand on a threatening of the scrivener's palsy, and the

signature (for reasons not unconnected with the bank) remains a solitary specimen of the original.

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Skerryvore, April 16th, 1887

My dearest Cummy,—As usual, I have been a dreary bad fellow and not written for ages; but you must just try to forgive me, to believe (what is the truth) that the number of my letters is no measure of the number of times I think of you, and to remember how much writing I have to do. The weather is bright, but still cold; and my father, I'm afraid, feels it sharply. He has had—still has, rather—a most obstinate jaundice, which has reduced him cruelly in strength, and really upse him altogether. I hope, or think, he is perhaps a little better; but he suffers much, cannot sleep at nights, and gives John and my mother a severe life of it to wait upon him. My wife is, I think, a little better, but no great shakes. I keep mightily respectable myself.

Coolin's Tombstone is now built into the front wall of Skerryvore, and poor Bogie's (with a Latin inscription also) is set just above it. Poor, unhappy wee man, he died, as you must have heard, in fight, which was what he would have chosen; for military glory was more in his line than the domestic virtues. I believe this is about all my news, except that, as I write, there is a blackbird singing in our garden trees, as it were at Swanston. I would like fine to go up the burnside a bit, and sit by the pool and be young again —or no, be what I am still, only there instead of here, for just a little. Did you see that I had written about John Todd? In this month's *Longman* it was; if you have not seen it, I will try and send it you. Some day climb as high as Halkerside for me (I am never likely to do it for myself), and sprinkle some of the well water

on the turf. I am afraid it is a pagan rite, but quite harmless, and *ye can sain it wi' a bit prayer.* Tell the Peewies that I mind their forbears well. My heart is sometimes heavy and sometimes glad to mind it all. But for what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful. Don't forget to sprinkle the water, and do it in my name; I feel a childish eagerness in this.

Remember me most kindly to James, and with all sorts of love to yourself, believe me, your laddie,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I suppose Mrs. Todd ought to see the paper about her man; judge of that, and if you think she would not dislike it, buy her one from me, and let me know. The article is called *Pastoral,* in *Longman's Magazine* for April. I will send you the money; I would to-day, but it's the Sabbie day, and I cannae.

R. L. S.

Remembrances from all here.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The following sets forth the *pros* and *cons* which were balancing each other in his mind in regard to his scheme of going to make a stand in his own person against agrarian outrage in Ireland.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *April* 15 *or* 16 (*the hour not being known*), 1887

My dear Mrs. Jenkin,—It is I know not what hour of the night; but I cannot sleep, have lit the gas, and here goes.

First, all your packet arrived: I have dipped into the Schumann already with great pleasure. Surely, in what concerns us there is a sweet little chirrup; the *Good Words* arrived in the morning just when I needed it, and the famous notes that I had lost were recovered also in the nick of time.

And now I am going to bother you with my affairs: premising, first, that this is *private;* second, that what-

ever I do the *Life* shall be done first, and I am getting on with it well; and third, that I do not quite know why I consult you, but something tells me you will hear with fairness.

Here is my problem. The Curtin women are still miserable prisoners; no one dare buy their farm of them, all the manhood of England and the world stands aghast before a threat of murder. (1) Now, my work can be done anywhere; hence I can take up without loss a backgoing Irish farm, and live on, though not (as I had originally written) in it: First Reason. (2) If I should be killed, there are a good many who would feel it: writers are so much in the public eye, that a writer being murdered would attract attention, throw a bull's-eye light upon this cowardly business: Second Reason. (3) I am not unknown in the States, from which the funds come that pay for these brutalities: to some faint extent my death (if I should be killed) would tell there: Third Reason. (4) *Nobody else is taking up this obvious and crying duty:* Fourth Reason. (5) I have a crazy health and may die at any moment, my life is of no purchase in an insurance office, it is the less account to husband it, and the business of husbanding a life is dreary and demoralising: Fifth Reason.

I state these in no order, but as they occur to me. And I shall do the like with the objections.

First Objection: It will do no good; you have seen Gordon die, and nobody minded; nobody will mind if you die. This is plainly of the devil. Second Objection: You will not even be murdered, the climate will miserably kill you, you will strangle out in a rotten damp heat, in congestion, etc. Well, what then? It changes nothing: the purpose is to brave crime; let me brave it, for such time and to such an extent as God allows. Third Objection: The Curtin women are probably highly uninteresting females. I haven't a doubt of it. But the Government cannot, men will not, protect them. If I am the only one to see this public duty, it is to the public and the Right I should per-

form it—not to Mesdames Curtin. Fourth Objection: I am married. "I have married a wife!" I seem to have heard it before. It smells ancient! what was the context? Fifth Objection: My wife has had a mean life (1), loves me (2), could not bear to lose me (3), (1) I admit: I am sorry. (2) But what does she love me for? and (3) she must lose me soon or late. And after all, because we run this risk, it does not follow we should fail. Sixth Objection: My wife wouldn't like it. No, she wouldn't. Who would? But the Curtins don't like it. And all those who are to suffer if this goes on, won't like it. And if there is a great wrong, somebody must suffer. Seventh Objection: I won't like it. No, I will not; I have thought it through, and I will not. But what of that? And both she and I may like it more than we suppose. We shall lose friends, all comforts, all society: so has everybody who has ever done anything; but we shall have some excitement, and that's a fine thing; and we shall be trying to do the right, and that's not to be despised. Eighth Objection: I am an author with my work before me. See Second Reason. Ninth Objection: But am I not taken with the hope of excitement? I was at first. I am not much now. I see what a dreary, friendless, miserable, God-forgotten business it will be. And anyway, is not excitement the proper reward of doing anything both right and a little dangerous? Tenth Objection: But am I not taken with a notion of glory? I daresay I am. Yet I see quite clearly how all points to nothing coming, to a quite inglorious death by disease and from the lack of attendance; or even if I should be knocked on the head, as these poor Irish promise, how little any one will care. It will be a smile at a thousand breakfast-tables. I am nearly forty now; I have not many illusions. And if I had? I do not love this health-tending, housekeeping life of mine. I have a taste for danger, which is human, like the fear of it. Here is a fair cause; a just cause; no knight ever set lance in rest for a juster. Yet it needs not the strength

I have not, only the passive courage that I hope I could muster, and the watchfulness that I am sure I could learn.

Here is a long midnight dissertation; with myself; with you. Please let me hear. But I charge you this: if you see in this idea of mine the finger of duty, do not dissuade me. I am nearing forty, I begin to love my ease and my home and my habits, I never knew how much till this arose; do not falsely counsel me to put my head under the bed-clothes. And I will say this to you: my wife, who hates the idea, does not refuse. "It is nonsense," says she, "but if you go, I will go." Poor girl, and her home and her garden that she was so proud of! I feel her garden most of all, because it is a pleasure (I suppose) that I do not feel myself to share.

1. Here is a great wrong.
2. " a growing wrong.
3. " a wrong founded on crime.
4. " crime that the Government cannot prevent.
5. Here is crime that it occurs to no man to defy.
6. But it has occurred to me.
7. Being a known person, some will notice my defiance.
8. Being a writer, I can *make* people notice it.
9. And, I think, *make* people imitate me.
10. Which would destroy in time this whole scaffolding of oppression.
11. And if I fail, however ignominiously, that is not my concern. It is, with an odd mixture of reverence and humorous remembrances of Dickens, be it said—it is A-nother's.

And here, at I cannot think what hour of the morning, I shall dry up, and remain—Yours, really in want of a little help.

R. L. S.

Sleepless at midnight's dewy hour.
" " witching "
" " maudlin "
etc.

Next morning.—Eleventh Objection: I have a father and mother. And who has not? Macduff's was a rare case: it we must wait for a Macduff. Besides, my father will not perhaps be long here. Twelfth Objection: The cause of England in Ireland is not worth supporting. *A qui le dites-vous?* And I am not supporting that. Home Rule, if you like. Cause of decency, the idea that populations should not be taught to gain public ends by private crime, the idea that for all men to bow before a threat of crime is to loosen and degrade beyond redemption the whole fabric of man's decency.

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

This and the next letter to his wife I have no means of dating accurately. They were written during a short absence of Mrs. Stevenson's in London. Stevenson had begun to work on the life of his friend Fleeming Jenkin, whose widow had been to Bournemouth that he might consult her concerning the task.

[*Bournemouth,* 1887]

My dear Fellow,—I am very well. Let Lloyd get his writing thing; I will send a cheque. My father and mother came here to-day; he very yellow and not very well, she bad with neuralgia. I was all afternoon at the piano. When you return I shall be able to play a Bach musette, kind of decently, and to hammer out the rigadoon of Rameau's. I never played so like a human being as to-day; I entranced myself—don't know how it might have struck a stranger. I cannot send you the letters to-day as they are not answered. Shall to-morrow. Nothing about Doctors. Mrs. Jenkin left this morning, saying her mind was at peace about the

Life. I go on. I wonder Colvin doesn't tell me his news. Why nothing about Doctors? You promised to let me know. Heavens, what a fine time I had at the piano: four hours I believe; tell Gatchie, I really get a kind of notion of deciphering. If I live ten years, I might master it, but I have come to the conclusion that I should never look forward or backward now; having come to a fine plateau of life. I kind of slightly miss you at this moment; the first sign, upon my soul—I have been so busy with letters and *Jenkin* and the seraphic spurt at the piano.—Ever your

LOUIS.

To MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

I cannot remember about the picture of this beau: probably Beau Brummel, the historical prototype of Beau Austin in Stevenson's and Henley's play. "Ginger" is a pet cat so named by reason of his colour.

[*Bournemouth*, 1887]

MY DEAR OLD GIRL,—Thanks for your kind and interesting letter and the lovely picture of the beau. I have kept my orders strictly; in bed at ten sharp, if not before. I am quite well, except for acidity, which instead of decreasing, grows upon me: if an alkali was suddenly applied I should go off like a squib. I am put on a very dreary diet of meat, bread, and brandy and water, and drain the flowing alkaline draught at intervals, and never without alarm. Scott says, if this doesn't start me all right in a week, he will pack me to London. This seems a pity: I spoke of Bath, but he said at this season he could not let me take any other change except to town. I hope it won't be necessary. The German translators are worked off. Yesterday there were nine letters sent off; to-day this is already my fifth, but I take you earlier in the list as you have deserved well of your country.

The writing table came, and is lovely, but I am sorry to say one of the keys does not fit, which leaves

us in a state of painful curiosity: Valentine who was in a high state of excitement before I saw it (it came while I was abed) had pitched on one particular lockfast as the home of the secreted dollar or last will: I did the same: and we can't open it, which is abominable.

When do you return? Colvin comes Tuesday. Henley, Wednesday. I have had my days alone after all; and the result is that my conscience begins to be at peace. I should have three a month at least. But even an easy conscience is but a small thing to one dipped in acid: and I am a mere vinegar bottle. Ginger * is very kind to me; he was out last night in the rain, came in soaked, wished to lie in my bosom, and quarreled with me sharply because I regimbed. I hope you keep pretty good. I send you my love and am your acetic patient LOUIS.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The first paragraph of the following refers to the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin:* the second, to a remark of his correspondent that a task such as he had proposed to himself in Ireland should be undertaken by a society rather than an individual.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April,* 1887]

My dear Mrs. Jenkin,—The Book. It is all drafted: I hope soon to send you for comments Chapters III., IV., and V. Chapter VII. is roughly but satisfactorily drafted: a very little work should put that to rights. But Chapter VI. is no joke; it is a *mare magnum:* I swim and drown and come up again; and it is all broken ends and mystification: moreover, I perceive I am in want of more matter. I must have, first of all, a little letter from Mr. Ewing about the phonograph work: *If* you think he would understand it is quite a matter of chance whether I use a word or a fact out of it. If you think he would not: I will go without. Also, could I have a look at Ewing's *précis?* And lastly, I per-

* The cat.

ceive I must interview you again about a few points; they are very few, and might come to little; and I propose to go on getting things as well together as I can in the meanwhile, and rather have a final time when all is ready and only to be criticised. I do still think it will be good. I wonder if Trélat would let me cut? But no, I think I wouldn't after all; 'tis so quaint and pretty and clever and simple and French, and gives such a good sight of Fleeming: the plum of the book, I think.

You misunderstood me in one point: I always hoped to found such a society; that was the outside of my dream, and would mean entire success. *But*—I cannot play Peter the Hermit. In these days of the Fleet Street journalist, I cannot send out better men than myself, with wives or mothers just as good as mine, and sisters (I may at least say) better, to a danger and a long-drawn dreariness that I do not share. My wife says it's cowardice; what brave men are the leader-writers! Call it cowardice; it is mine. Mind you, I may end by trying to do it by the pen only: I shall not love myself if I do; and is it ever a good thing to do a thing for which you despise yourself?—even in the doing? And if the thing you do is to call upon others to do the thing you neglect? I have never dared to say what I feel about men's lives, because my own was in the wrong: shall I dare to send them to death? The physician must heal himself: he must honestly *try* the path he recommends: if he does not even try, should he not be silent?

I thank you very heartily for your letter, and for the seriousness you brought to it. You know, I think when a serious thing is your own, you keep a saner man by laughing at it and yourself as you go. So I do not write possibly with all the really somewhat sickened gravity I feel. And indeed, what with the book, and this business to which I referred, and Ireland, I am scarcely in an enviable state. Well, I ought to be glad, after ten years of the worst training on earth—

valetudinarianism—that I can still be troubled by a duty. You shall hear more in time; so far, I am at least decided: I will go and see Balfour when I get to London.

We have all had a great pleasure: a Mrs. Rawlinson came and brought with her a nineteen-year-old daughter, simple, human, as beautiful as—herself; I never admired a girl before, you know it was my weakness: we are all three dead in love with her. How nice to be able to do so much good to harassed people by—yourself!—Ever yours, R. L. S.

To Miss Rawlinson

Here follows a compliment in verse to the young lady last mentioned, whose Christian name was May.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April,* 1887]

Of the many flowers you brought me,
Only some were meant to stay,
And the flower I thought the sweetest
Was the flower that went away.

Of the many flowers you brought me,
All were fair and fresh and gay,
But the flower I thought the sweetest
Was the blossom of the May.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Within a fortnight after the date of the above Stevenson went himself, and for the last time, to Scotland; not, indeed, to visit his old haunts among the Pentlands, but to be present, too late for recognition, at the death of his father (May 8, 1887). Business detained him for some weeks, and the following was written just before his return to Bournemouth.

[*Edinburgh, June,* 1887]

My dear S. C.,—At last I can write a word to you. Your little note in the *P.M.G.* was charming. I have

written four pages in the *Contemporary*, which Bunting found room for: they are not very good, but I shall do more for his memory in time.

About the death, I have long hesitated, I was long before I could tell my mind: and now I know it, and can but say that I am glad. If we could have had my father, that would have been a different thing. But to keep that changeling—suffering changeling—any longer, could better none and nothing. Now he rests; it is more significant, it is more like himself. He will begin to return to us in the course of time, as he was and as we loved him.

My favourite words in literature, my favourite scene —"O let him pass," Kent and Lear—was played for me here in the first moment of my return. I believe Shakespeare saw it with his own father. I had no words; but it was shocking to see. He died on his feet, you know; was on his feet the last day, knowing nobody—still he would be up. This was his constant wish; also that he might smoke a pipe on his last day. The funeral would have pleased him; it was the largest private funeral in man's memory here.

We have no plans, and it is possible we may go home without going through town. I do not know; I have no views yet whatever; nor can have any at this stage of my cold and my business.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

During the two months following his father's death Stevenson had suffered much both from his old complaints and from depression of mind. His only work had been in preparing for press the verse collection *Underwoods*, the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*, and the volume of essays called *Memories and Portraits*. The opinions quoted are those of physicians.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *July or August*, 1887

Dear Lad,—I write to inform you that Mr. Stevenson's well-known work, *Virginibus Puerisque*, is about

to be reprinted. At the same time a second volume called *Memories and Portraits* will issue from the roaring loom. Its interest will be largely autobiographical, Mr. S. having sketched there the lineaments of many departed friends, and dwelt fondly, and with a m'istened eye, upon by-gone pleasures. The two will be issued under the common title of *Familiar Essays;* but the volumes will be vended separately to those who are mean enough not to hawk at both.

The blood is at last stopped: only yesterday. I began to think I should not get away. However, I hope—I hope—remark the word—no boasting—I hope I may luff up a bit now. Dobell, whom I saw, gave as usual a good account of my lungs, and expressed himself, like his neighbours, hopefully about the trip. He says, my uncle says, Scott says, Brown says—they all say—You ought not to be in such a state of health; you should recover. Well, then, I mean to. My spirits are rising again after three months of black depression: I almost begin to feel as if I should care to live: I would, by God! And so I believe I shall.—Yours,

BULLETIN M'GURDER.

How has the *Deacon* gone?

To Sir Walter Simpson

Written during Stevenson's last stay with me at the British Museum; in the course of which he had made up his mind to try as a last resource a trip to one of the mountain climates of North America.

British Museum [*July,* 1887]

My dear Simpson,—This is a long time I have not acknowledged the *Art of Golf,* though I read it through within thirty-six hours of its arrival. I have been ill and out of heart, and ill again and again ill, till I am weary of it, and glad indeed to try the pitch-farthing hazard of a trip to Colorado or New Mexico. There we go, if I prove fit for the start, on August 20th.

Meanwhile, the *Art of Golf*. A lot of it is very funny, and I like the fun very well; but what interested me most was the more serious part, because it turns all the while on a branch of psychology that no one has treated and that interests me much: the psychology of athletics. I have every reason to be interested in it, because I am abnormal: I have no memory in athletics. I have forgotten how to ride and how to skate; and I should not be the least surprised if I had forgotten how to swim.

I find I can write no more: it is the first I have tried since I was ill; and I am too weak.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *August 6th,* 1887

My dear Low,—We—my mother, my wife, my stepson, my maidservant, and myself, five souls—leave, if all is well, Aug. 20th, per Wilson line s.s. *Ludgate Hill*. Shall probably evade N. Y. at first, cutting straight to a watering-place: Newport, I believe, its name. Afterwards we shall steal incognito into *la bonne ville*, and see no one but you and the Scribners, if it may be so managed. You must understand I have been very seedy indeed, quite a dead body; and unless the voyage does miracles, I shall have to draw it dam fine. Alas, "The Canoe Speaks" is now out of date; it will figure in my volume of verses now imminent. However, I may find some inspiration some day.—Till very soon, yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The lady to whom the following (and much correspondence yet to come) is addressed had been an attached friend of the Skerryvore household and a pupil of Stevenson's in the art of writing. She had given R. L. S. a paper-cutter by way of farewell token at his starting.

Bournemouth, August 19th, 1887

My dear Miss Boodle,—I promise you the paper-knife shall go to sea with me; and if it were in my disposal, I should promise it should return with me too. All that you say, I thank you for very much; I thank you for all the pleasantness that you have brought about our house: and I hope the day may come when I shall see you again in poor old Skerryvore, now left to the natives of Canada, or to worse barbarians, if such exist. I am afraid my attempt to jest is rather *à contre-cœur*.—Good-bye—*au revoir*—and do not forget your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

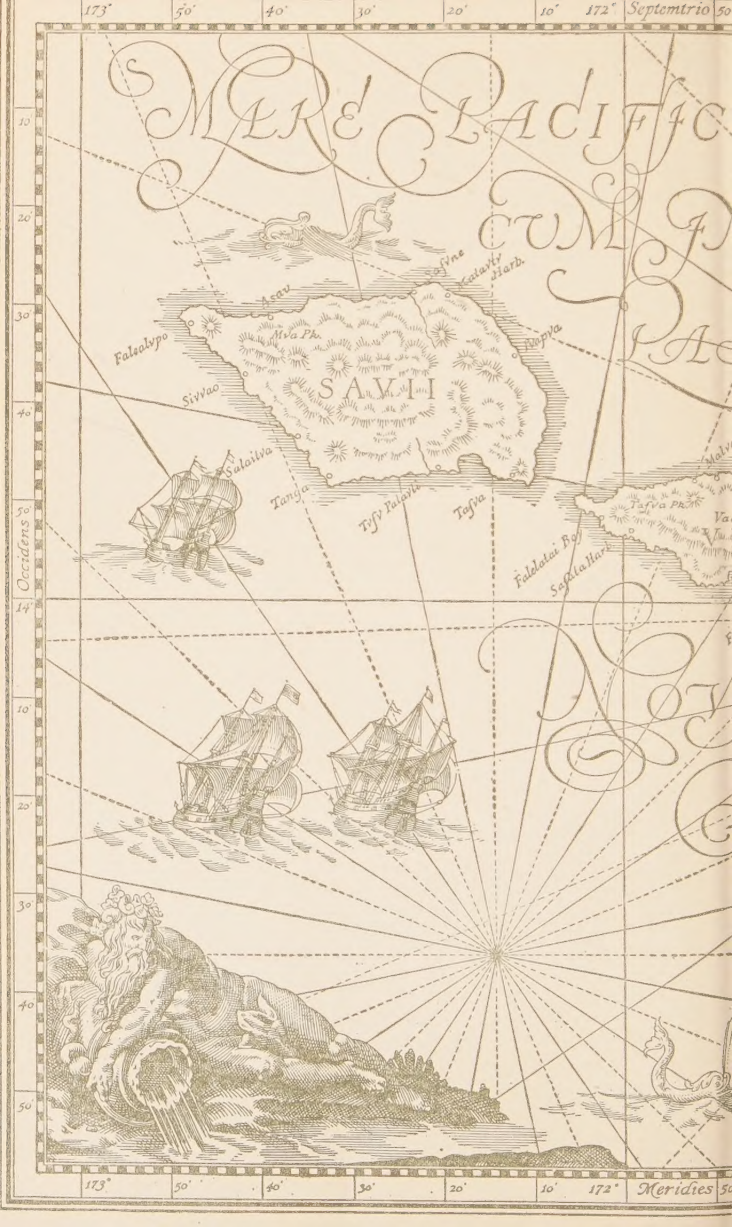
To Messrs. Chatto & Windus

The titles and proofs mentioned in the text are presumably those of *Underwoods* and *Memories and Portraits*.

Bournemouth [*August,* 1887]

Dear Sirs,—I here enclose the two titles. Had you not better send me the bargains to sign? I shall be here till Saturday; and shall have an address in London (which I shall send you) till Monday, when I shall sail. Even if the proofs do not reach you till Monday morning, you could send a clerk from Fenchurch Street Station at 10:23 A.M. for Galleons Station, and he would find me embarking on board the *Ludgate Hill,* Island Berth, Royal Albert Dock. Pray keep this in case it should be necessary to catch this last chance. I am most anxious to have the proofs with me on the voyage.—Yours very truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.



173°
50'
40'
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Septemtrio
Occidens
Meridies
SAVII
Asau
Mva Pk.
Falealypo
Sivvao
Salaitva
Tanga
Tysv Palavli
Tasva
Tasva Pk.
Falelatai Bos
Sasata Harb.

MARE
PACIFICVM
cum insulis in eodem passim sparsis, novissima descriptio
SPARSIS
Oriens
TVTVILA
Milliaria communia
Clarentius Hornung, Excudit